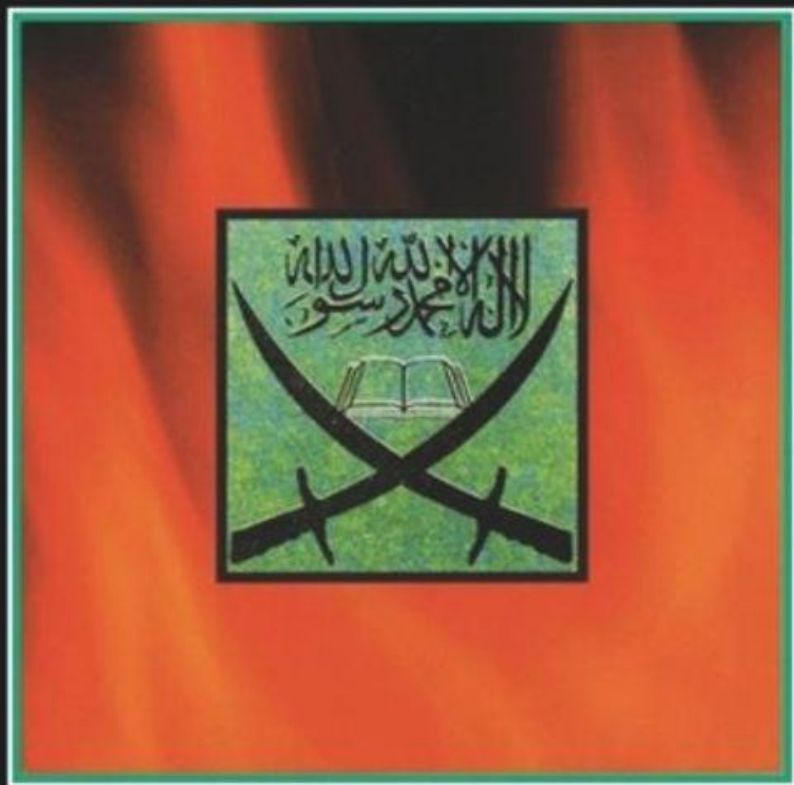


LASKAR JIHAD



Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity
in Post-New Order Indonesia

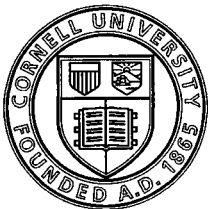
Noorhaidi Hasan

CORNELL SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM



UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA – INDONESIA

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Cornell University

Noorhaidi Hasan

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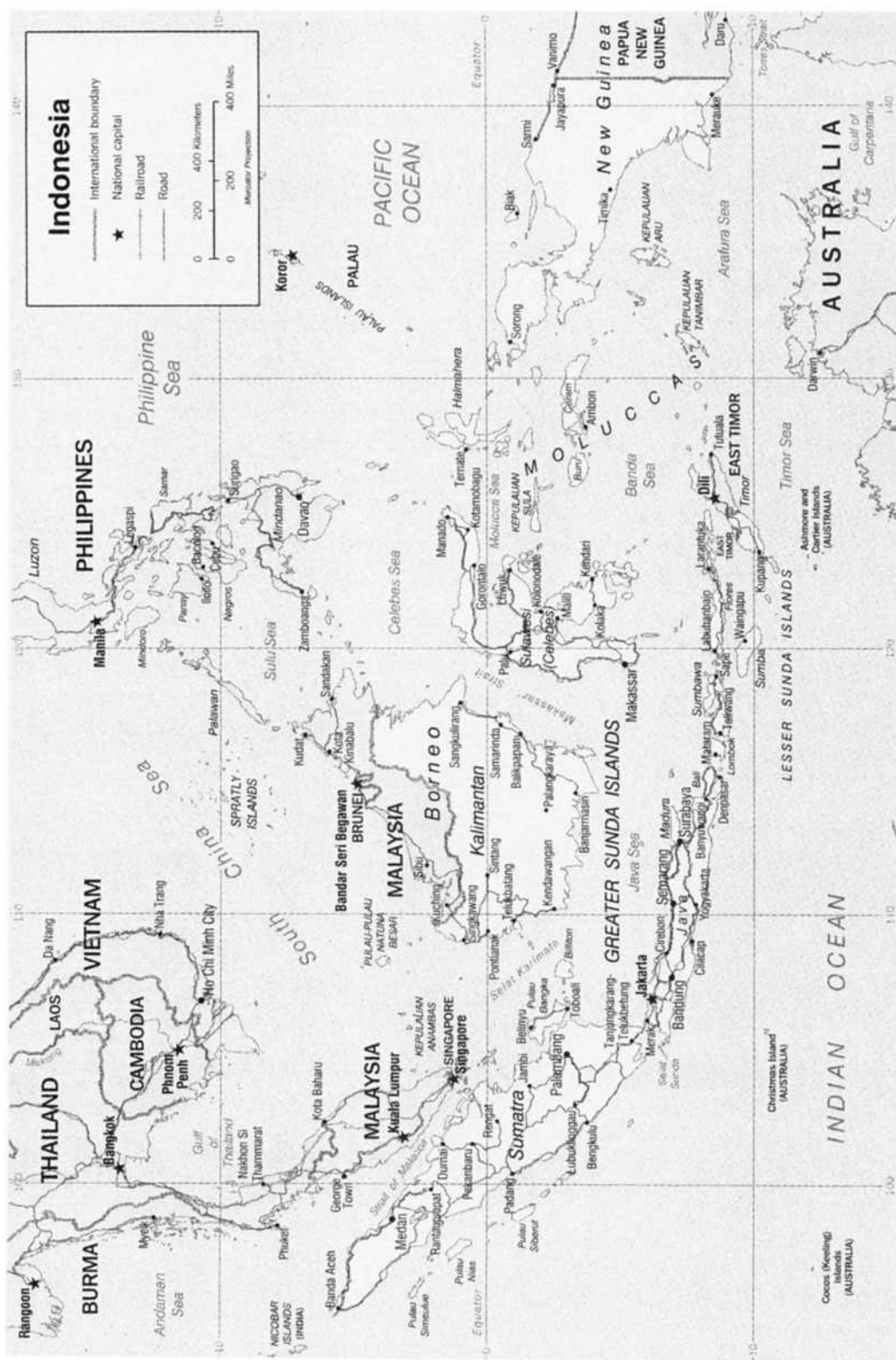
NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

This book uses the system of Arabic transliteration adopted by many institutions and journals in the Anglo-Saxon world, such as the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. However, for purposes of readability and familiarity, the transliteration had to be simplified (or violated): diacritics could not be used, hence some different Arabic letters had to be Romanized in the same way; diphthongs are not differentiated from vowels. Names of personalities, organizations, and foundations, as well as titles of books, journals, and articles, are rendered according to locally applied spellings and transliterations.

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INTRODUCTION

On May 21, 1998, Indonesia witnessed the collapse of the Suharto-led New Order authoritarian regime that had been in power for over thirty-two years. This dramatic event was precipitated by the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997, which brought about the dramatic meltdown of the Indonesian currency, inflation, mass dismissals, and unemployment. As the crisis deepened, voices of dissent and opposition to the regime increased. Pervasive disappointment and frustration spawned a wave of popular student-led protests that also involved intellectuals, professionals, activists from non-governmental organizations, and other elements of Indonesian civil society. These massive demonstrations called for reform and demanded Suharto's removal. Following the bloody riots that pounded Jakarta on May 14 and 15, 1998, when hundreds were killed, Suharto announced his resignation, and then vice president B. J. Habibie was immediately sworn in as his replacement.¹

Suharto's fall proved to be a decisive democratic breakthrough. Under the (as it turned out) transitional presidencies of Habibie and his successor, Abdurrahman Wahid, a far-reaching process of liberalization and democratization, coupled with the weakening of state power, utterly transformed the political landscape. A variety of ideologies, identities, and interests that had previously been repressed rose to the surface and expressed themselves. They competed for the newly liberated public sphere and fought for popular support. Paradoxically, in several provinces in Indonesia—notably West and Central Kalimantan, Eastern Nusa Tenggara, the Moluccas and Central Sulawesi—riots and communal conflicts flared up, divided along religious, racial, and ethnic lines. In a very short period of time, these conflicts cost thousands of lives and drove the country to the brink of civil war.²

During this tumultuous and chaotic transition, a number of Muslim paramilitary groups with names like Laskar Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Force), Laskar Jihad (Holy War Force), and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warriors Force) achieved notoriety by taking to the streets to demand the comprehensive implementation of the *shari`a* (Islamic law), raiding cafes, discotheques, casinos,

¹ For a further account on the fall of Suharto, see Donald K. Emmerson, "Exit and Aftermath: The Crisis of 1997-98," in *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, ed. Donald K. Emmerson (New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 295-344; Edward Aspinall, "Opposition and Elite Conflict in the Fall of Soeharto," in *The Fall of Soeharto*, ed. Geoff Forrester and R. J. May (Singapore: Select Books, 1999), pp. 130-53; and John McBeth, "Political Update," in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?*, ed. Geoff Forrester (Leiden: KITLV, 1999), pp. 21-32.

² These conflicts have become the subject of numerous volumes. See Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer, eds., *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001); Benedict Anderson, ed., *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2001); Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad, eds., *Roots of Violence in Indonesia. Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); and Chaider S. Bamualim et al., eds., *Communal Conflicts in Contemporary Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya IAIN Jakarta and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2002).

brothels, and other reputed dens of iniquity, and, most importantly, calling for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots. Through these actions, they criticized the prevailing political, social, and economic system for having failed to save the Indonesian Muslim *umma* (community of believers) from the ongoing crisis, while demonstrating their determination to position themselves as the most committed defenders of Islam.³

The efflorescence of these organizations has complemented and facilitated the development of similar vigilante youth groups organized by political parties, mass organizations, and the ruling regime. Among these groups are the Barisan Pemuda Ka'bah (*Ka'ba* Youth Squad), the Pam Swakarsa (Self-Service Security Force), the Pendekar Banten (Banten Warriors), the Gerakan Pemuda Islam (Muslim Youth Movement, GPI), and the Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang (God's Army Front of Crescent Moon Party). In expressing themselves and their interests in the Indonesian public sphere, these groups organized with other conservative Muslim organizations, such as the Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World, KISDI), the Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia (Community of Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood, JIM), the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Party of Liberation, HT), the Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (the United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students, Kammi), and the Himpunan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim antar-Kampus (Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students, Hammas).

LASKAR PEMBELA ISLAM (LPI)

Laskar Pembela Islam was the paramilitary division of the Front Pembela Islam (Front of the Defenders of Islam, FPI), which was founded by Muhammad Rizieq Syihab (b. 1965), a young man of Hadrami descent born into a family of *sayyids*, who are believed to be descended from the Prophet.⁴ He collaborated with other leading figures in the *sayyid* network, including Idrus Jamilullail, Ali Sahil, Saleh al-Habsyi, Segaf Mahdi, Muhsin Ahmad Alatas, and Ali bin Alwi Ba'agil.⁵ Before establishing this organization, he had already made a name as a well-known religious preacher

³ There are some preliminary, somewhat superficial, surveys about these groups. See Chaeder Bamualim et al., "*Gerakan Islam Radikal Kontemporer di Indonesia: Front Pembela Islam (FPI) dan Laskar Jihad (FKAWJ)*," *Research Report* (Jakarta: IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2001); Jajang Jahroni et al., "*Hubungan Agama dan Negara di Indonesia: Studi tentang Pandangan Politik Laskar Jihad, Front Pembela Islam, Ikhwanul Muslimin, dan Laskar Mujahidin*," *Research Report* (Jakarta: INSEP-LIPI, 2002); Imam Tholikhah and Choirul Fuad Yusuf, eds., *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama dan Diklat Keagamaan Depag, 2002); Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal, Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002); Zainuddin Fananie et al., *Radikalisme Keagamaan dan Perubahan Sosial* (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2002); Alip Purnomo, *FPI Disalahpahami* (Jakarta: Mediatama Indonesia, 2003); and Yunanto S. et al., *Militant Islamic Movements in Indonesia and South-East Asia* (Jakarta: The Ridep Institute and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2003). In my previous study, I also have discussed in passing the profiles of these groups: see Noorhaidi Hasan, "Faith and Politics: The Rise of the Laskar Jihad in the Era of Transition in Indonesia," *Indonesia* 73 (April 2002): 145-69.

⁴ The term "Hadrami" used here refers to the Arab migrant community from Hadramawt, the southern part of present-day Yemen, and their descendants in Indonesia.

⁵ M. Rizieq Syihab, *Kyai Kampung: Ujung Tombak Perjuangan Umat Islam* (Ciputat: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

while also managing his daily tasks as a religious teacher in an Islamic school of the Jamiatul Khair Hadrami organization in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta. This area is known as one of the most important centers of *sayyid* influence in the Indonesian capital. The nearby Kwitang Mosque serves as the “political center” of the *sayyids*, to which powerful figures associated with the New Order have affiliated themselves. Having graduated from the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic, LIPIA), a Jakarta-based institute of higher learning directly sponsored by Saudi Arabia, Syihab had the opportunity to continue his studies at the Tarbiya Faculty at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud University in Riyadh under the sponsorship of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).⁶

Laskar Pembela Islam was, to a large extent, not founded on a firm institutional basis. This group was loosely organized with open membership. Most members came from the mosque youth associations scattered throughout Jakarta and a number of Islamic schools (*madrasas*) in the region. Others, particularly in the rank and file, were simply jobless youths, including those from *preman* (thug) groups, who joined for the promise of payment for each action. The organization’s leadership encouraged members to listen to regular religious lectures given by Syihab, who consistently emphasized the importance of jihad and the spirit of the motto “to live nobly or better die in holy war as a martyr.”⁷ In the course of time, Laskar Pembela Islam succeeded in extending its network to cities outside Jakarta, claiming to have established eighteen provincial and more than fifty district branches with tens of thousands of sympathizers throughout Indonesia.

In its capacity as a paramilitary organization, however, Laskar Pembela Islam was more tightly organized and had a distinct, stratified system identified by Arabic terms. It was divided into *jundis* (from the Arabic *jund*, literally meaning “soldier”), which are similar to platoons, each of which consisted of twenty-one members. Each *jundi* was led by a *ra’is* (chief), subordinate to an *amir* (commander). The *amirs* were practically the leaders of Laskar Pembela Islam at the sub-district level. They were subordinate to *qa’ids* (leaders), who served as leaders at the district level, and *walis* (guardians), leaders at the provincial level. All *walis* were subordinate to the *imam* (the head of staff), the second to the commander-in-chief, known among the members as “*imam besar*.”⁸

Laskar Pembela Islam first made its presence felt in a mass demonstration on August 17, 1998, where it adamantly challenged those elements that had rejected Habibie as Suharto’s successor. It became the most active group in conducting what it called *razia maksiat*—raids on vice. Armed with sticks, members repeatedly attacked cafés, discotheques, casinos, and brothels, shouting the slogan *al-‘amr bi’l-ma’ruf wa-l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*, a Qur’anic phrase meaning “enjoining good and opposing vice.”⁹ In perpetrating these actions, they usually moved slowly, approaching their targets using open trucks. They quickly broke up whatever

⁶ For more information about this figure, see “Al-Habib Muhammad Rizieq, Ketua Umum Front Pembela Islam,” interview, *Suara Hidayatullah* 4,12 (August 1999): 64-69.

⁷ This motto reads in Indonesian as “Hiduplah secara mulia atau lebih baik mati secara syahid.”

⁸ On the complete structure of the Laskar Pembela Islam organization, see Front Pembela Islam, *Struktur Laskar FPI* (Jakarta: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

⁹ For a detailed discussion of this term, see Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

activities were going on and destroyed anything they found there. These raids did not raise any significant challenge from security agents.

To voice its political demands more loudly, over time Laskar Pembela Islam organized more mass demonstrations. Celebrating its first anniversary in August 1999, thousands of members marched to the headquarters of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly, MPR). They waved banners and posters supporting Habibie's reelection bid, while strenuously and unequivocally decrying Megawati Sukarnoputri's presidential candidacy.¹⁰ At the same time, they demanded the government abrogate the policy of *asas tunggal*, or "sole foundation," which required all political and social organizations to accept Pancasila, the ideology of the state, as the only foundation of their existence. They even demanded that MPR enforce the Jakarta Charter, once intended to be the preamble to the constitution.¹¹ In this document, the statement "with the obligation to carry out the *shari'a* for its adherents" was added to the first principle (Belief in God) of the Pancasila, so that adopting the Charter would have in one way or another given Islamic law constitutional status.

On one occasion, the members of Laskar Pembela Islam attacked the Komisi Nasional Hak Azasi Manusia (National Commission of Human Rights, Komnasham), which they accused of acting unfairly towards Muslims and favoring Christians. At that time, the commission was investigating the past actions of certain army generals, particularly then-Minister of Defense Wiranto, who was suspected of having committed human rights violations during military operations in East Timor. Laskar Pembela Islam dared to take over the Governor's Office of Jakarta and forced Governor Sutiyoso to restrict the operation hours of amusement venues scattered throughout the Indonesian capital. It even issued an ultimatum demanding that the governor promptly shut down a number of discotheques.¹²

LASKAR JIHAD (LJ)

The loose character of Laskar Pembela Islam's membership distinguishes it clearly from Laskar Jihad. The latter is a paramilitary group uniting young men who call themselves Salafis, followers of the *Salaf al-Salih* (pious ancestors). This group was active under the umbrella organization Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet, FKAJ), the establishment of which was officially inaugurated in the palpably religious mass gathering, *tabligh akbar*, held in Yogyakarta in January 2000.¹³ Even before its official establishment, FKAJ was already in existence. It had its beginnings in the Jama'ah Ihyaus Sunnah, which was basically an exclusive *da'wa* (Islamic propagation) movement focusing on the purity of the faith and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals.

¹⁰ As for their repudiation of the Megawati candidacy, see Front Pembela Islam, *Maklumat Front Pembela Islam tentang Presiden Wanita* (Jakarta: Front Pembela Islam, 2001).

¹¹ On the proposal of FPI concerning the enforcement of the Jakarta Charter, see M. Rizieq Syihab, *Dialog Piagam Jakarta: Kumpulan Jawaban Seputar Keraguan terhadap Penegakan Syari'at Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ibnu Sidah, 2000).

¹² See Front Pembela Islam, *Satu Tahun Front Pembela Islam: Kilas Balik Satu Tahun FPI* (Jakarta: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

¹³ The phrase *tabligh akbar* is derived from two Arabic words—*tabligh* and *akbar*—which literally mean "the propagation of message" and "big, great or grand," respectively.

Laskar Jihad was established by Ja'far Umar Thalib (b. 1961) and leading personalities among the Salafis, including Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Ayip Syafruddin, and Ma'ruf Bahrun. Thalib was born into a Hadrami family active in al-Irsyad, a modernist Muslim organization of predominantly non-*sayyid* Hadramis. Before studying at LIPIA, he had been enrolled at a *pesantren*, an Islamic boarding school, under the aegis of another Muslim modernist organization, Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, Persis), in Bangil, East Java. In the mid-1980s, he went to Pakistan to study at the Islamic Mawdudi Institute in Lahore. During his stay there, he had an opportunity to travel to Afghanistan, which was then in the throes of a long, grueling war against the Soviet Union. He claims to have had remarkable experiences on the Afghan battlefields with different factions of Afghan *mujahidin* (holy warriors). Lessons learned from these encounters were later reinforced by his academic journey to the Middle East to study with prominent religious authorities, particularly Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i of Yemen.

Laskar Jihad was established as an extension of the Special Division of FKAWJ, whose headquarters was located in Yogyakarta, with provincial and district branches scattered in almost every Indonesian province. This division was initially set up as a security unit for FKAWJ, particularly to safeguard its public activities. As it was modeled after the military organization, Laskar Jihad consisted of one brigade divided into battalions, companies, platoons, teams, and one intelligence section. Its four battalions were named after the first four caliphs, i.e., Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, 'Umar bin Khattab, 'Uthman bin 'Affan, and 'Ali bin Abi Talib. Each battalion had four companies, each company four platoons, and each platoon three teams of eleven members each. Thalib himself was appointed commander-in-chief and was assisted by a number of field commanders. The symbol of this group was two crossed sabers under the words "*La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah*" ("There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger").¹⁴

Laskar Jihad caught the public eye when it held a spectacular gathering at the Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta in early April 2000. Attended by about ten thousand participants, this gathering decried the "disaster" afflicting Moluccan Muslims, who were perceived as being threatened by genocide. To counteract the threat, Thalib proclaimed the necessity of armed jihad. He openly stated his determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with Moluccan Muslims fighting against Christian enemies. Subsequently, he established a paramilitary training camp in Bogor, south of Jakarta. The so-called united paramilitary training was organized under the supervision of former members of university student regiments (*resimen mahasiswa*) and veterans of the Afghan, Moro, and Kashmir Wars. It was reported that the training also involved some military personnel.

In fact, Laskar Jihad emerged as the largest and best organized group sending voluntary jihad fighters to the Moluccas. It claimed to have dispatched more than seven thousand fighters over a two-year period. The presence of these representatives, deployed in different places to confront Christians, undoubtedly changed the map of the communal conflict in the islands. Fueled by the spirit of jihad communicated by these fighters, Moluccan Muslims appeared to become more aggressive in their attacks against Christians, believing that the hour had arrived to take their revenge. Laskar Jihad reinforced its presence in the islands by addressing

¹⁴ These words are known as *shahada* or *shahadatain*, which denotes the Islamic profession of faith. See D. Gimaret, "Shahada," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IX (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 201.

the region's social issues and disseminating religious messages. It not only established Islamic kindergartens, primary schools, and Qur'anic recitation courses, but also went door-to-door to preach to people as directly as possible. Later, it sought to extend the zone of its jihad by sending hundreds of fighters to Poso, Central Sulawesi. Although this attempt failed, its fighters even tried to land in West Papua and Aceh.

Like Laskar Pembela Islam, Laskar Jihad repeatedly instigated violent street riots. In the name of the implementation of the *shari'a*, its members attacked cafés, brothels, and gambling dens in several cities. Since calls for the implementation of the *shari'a* had become more fluently articulated across the country, they even levied a *rajm* (stoning to death) sentence on a fighter who committed rape. They took to the streets to protest a number of Wahid's policies, such as his proposal to withdraw the MPR's decree banning the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party, PKI). Laskar Jihad believed that Wahid had failed to carry out his duty as a Muslim leader and had allowed his country to be trapped in a conspiracy thought to be the work of the West and Zionism.

LASKAR MUJAHIDIN INDONESIA (LMI)

Another paramilitary group, Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, has emerged as the latest and probably most deeply rooted militant organization in post-New Order Indonesia. It is a loose alliance of a dozen minor Muslim paramilitary organizations that had been scattered among cities such as Solo, Yogyakarta, Kebumen, Purwokerto, Tasikmalaya, and Makassar. Notable member organizations are Laskar Santri (Muslim Student Paramilitary Force), Laskar Jundullah (God's Army Paramilitary Force), Kompi Badar (Badar Company), Brigade Taliban (Taliban Brigade), Corps Hizbullah Divisi Sunan Bonang (God's Party Corps of the Sunan Bonang Division), Front Pembela Islam Surakarta (Front of the Defenders of Islam of Surakarta, FPIS), and Pasukan Komando Mujahidin (Holy Warrior Command Force).

Laskar Mujahidin falls under the umbrella organization Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Assembly). This assembly was established as the result of the so-called "first national congress of *mujahidin*," in Yogyakarta in August 2000. Around two thousand participants attended the congress. Among them I observed members of the aforementioned groups proudly wearing their own uniforms and guarding the entrances to the congress. At that time, all the participants were absorbed in discussing one central theme: the enforcement of the *shari'a* as an action necessary to curb the problems and disasters afflicting Indonesia. Within this context, notions of the *khilafa Islamiyya* (Islamic Caliphate), the *imama* (imamate), and jihad were also discussed.¹⁵ The congress drafted a charter called the Piagam Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Charter), which insists on rejecting all ideologies confronting and contradicting Islam and resolves to continue preaching and conducting jihad for the dignity of Islam.¹⁶

The congress opened on August 5, 2000, and ended two days later. This date was apparently not accidental. On the same date fifty-one years earlier, S. M.

¹⁵ Irfan S. Awwas, ed., *Risalah Kongres Mujahidin I dan Penegakan Syari'ah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2001).

¹⁶ Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, *Piagam Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, 2000).

Kartosuwirjo proclaimed the Negara Islam Indonesia, the Islamic State of Indonesia, an independent Islamic state within Indonesia. This dramatic event sparked the *Darul Islam* (Islamic Abode) rebellion in West Java and later Aceh and South Sulawesi.¹⁷ Inspired by the zest of the rebellion to establish an Islamic state, the so-called Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) movement arose in the 1970s. This underground movement appeared to draw other disaffected radicals into its orbit, forming small quietist groups named *usrah* (Ar. *'usra*, literally meaning "family") in various cities under different names, such as Jama'ah Islamiyah (Muslim community) in Solo, Generasi 554 in Jakarta, and NII Cirebon in Cirebon.¹⁸

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia recruited a number of leading personalities from different Islamic organizations and political parties, including Deliar Noer, Mochtar Naim, Mawardi Noor, Ali Yafie, Alawi Muhammad, Ahmad Syahirul Alim, and A. M. Saefuddin. They were appointed members of the so-called *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*, literally "those who have the power to unbind and bind," a kind of supreme body of the organization that resembles the advisory council. This body was led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, on whom was bestowed the title Amirul Mujahidin (Ar. *Amir al-Mujahidin*, literally meaning "the leader of holy warriors"). Ba'asyir is an elderly figure of Hadrami descent, who, in collaboration with Abdullah Sungkar, established the Pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, a conservative Islamic boarding school, in Solo, Central Java, in 1972.¹⁹ Both had been arrested in November 1978 for allegedly leading Jama'ah Islamiyah, and fled to Malaysia to escape another prison term in 1985. Addressing the congress, Ba'asyir proclaimed that the application of the *shari'a* was absolutely essential and argued that its rejection must be countered by jihad.²⁰

The congress itself was initiated by Irfan S. Awwas, chairman of the executive committee of the assembly. He was the editor-in-chief of the since-banned magazine, *Arrisalah*, in Yogyakarta, and served nine years of a thirteen-year prison sentence for activities associated with the NII movement. In this committee there were a number of sub-committees that addressed particular subjects, including the implementation of the *shari'a*, internal relations, resource development, political Islam, *bayt al-mal* ("house of treasury"), data and information, social welfare, militia, and women.²¹ With the support of former activists of the NII movement, some of whom had had experience in the Afghan War, this committee organized a variety of programs, including mass gatherings, discussions, seminars, publication of books, and paramilitary trainings.²²

¹⁷ Concerning this rebellion, see Hiroko Horikoshi, "The Dar-ul-Islam Movement of West Java (1942-62): An Experience in the Historical Process," *Indonesia* 20 (October 1975): 59-86; and C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

¹⁸ For an overview of the NII movement, see June Chandra Santosa, "Modernization, Utopia, and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 1996), appendix 3. This issue will be elaborated on later.

¹⁹ For the profile of this *pesantren*, see, for instance, Zuly Qodir, *Ada Apa Dengan Pesantren Ngruki* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Edukasi, 2003), and E. S. Soepriyadi, *Ngruki and Jaringan Terorisme* (Jakarta: Al-Mawardi Prima, 2003).

²⁰ Awwas, *Risalah Kongres Mujahidin I*, p. 139.

²¹ Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, *Mengenai Majelis Mujahidin* (Yogyakarta: Markaz Pusat Majelis Mujahidin, 2000).

²² Interview with Irfan S. Awwas, Yogyakarta, October 2001.

Calls for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots also satisfied the agenda of Laskar Mujahidin, which, in contrast to Laskar Jihad, preferred to operate secretly in small, trained, well-armed units. Publicity was the former's utmost concern, while defeating Christian enemies was the highest priority for the latter. In fact, Laskar Mujahidin often did not see eye-to-eye with Laskar Jihad. To guarantee the success of its jihad operations in the islands, Laskar Mujahidin reportedly received sophisticated weapons from various militia groups outside Indonesia, such as the Abu Sayyaf group in the southern Philippines. For Laskar Mujahidin, jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots was only a training run for real jihad against *taghut*, "oppressive tyrants."²³

ANTI-AMERICANISM

These three paramilitary groups, particularly Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, spearheaded the wave of anti-Americanism that followed the United States-led air strikes on Afghanistan, which was a response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on September 11, 2001. Particularly in reaction to George W. Bush's statement, "You are either with us or with the terrorists," group members repeatedly flooded the area around the US Embassy in Jakarta to express their enmity and to break up the police brigade guarding the location.²⁴ During demonstrations, they rejected Bush's justification for bombing Afghanistan and questioned his accusations that Osama bin Laden was behind the attacks.

When the threat of a US military retaliation became a reality, anti-American demonstrations staged by the groups became larger and more widespread. Demonstrators condemned the attacks and demanded the government sever its diplomatic ties with the United States. Such demonstrations occurred not only in Jakarta but also in half a dozen other cities, such as Surabaya, Makassar, Medan, and Solo. In some cities, demonstrators burned the American flag, as well as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise restaurant signs. To demonstrate their sympathy for Afghan Muslims, they even issued a threat, saying they would expel American citizens in particular and Westerners in general. Although this threat has never been acted upon, it undoubtedly aroused anxiety among most expatriates.

Paramilitary group demonstrators also displayed photographs of Bin Laden with the slogan "Death to the Great Satan, America!" They proclaimed Bin Laden a hero and praised him for leading what they called a holy resistance against an evil plan to destroy the Muslim *umma*. From their perspective, Bin Laden is an innocent victim of

²³ Interview with Irfan S. Awwas, Yogyakarta, October 2001. This term, "*taghut*," originally referred to the great pre-Islamic Arabian deities, but since then its focus has expanded, so it can now mean Satan, sorcerer, and rebel, and any power opposed to that of Islam. See F. H. Stewart, "*Taghut*," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. X (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 93-95.

²⁴ See the report made by Harold Crouch, "Indonesia: Violence and Radical Muslims," *Indonesia Briefing* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2001); Donald K. Emmerson, "Whose Eleventh? Indonesia and the United States Since 11 September," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9,1 (Spring 2002): 115-26; and Noorhaidi Hasan, "September 11 and Islamic Militancy in Post-New Order Indonesia," in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social, and Strategic Challenges for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. K. S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Singapore: ISEAS, 2005), pp. 301-24.

the arrogant United States, which, by bombing Afghanistan, had declared war on Islam and positioned itself as the greatest enemy of Muslims. For this reason, demonstrators went a step further by calling for jihad against the United States and its related interests. They opened registration booths to recruit aspirant *mujahidin* to travel to Afghanistan. Even though these threats primarily remained rhetorical, some group leaders made it known that a dozen of their holy fighters had landed in Afghanistan.²⁵

Laskar Jihad preferred not to involve itself in the demonstrations, holding that demonstrations were expressions of democracy, a system of government which itself opposes the absolute authority of God. Nevertheless, Thalib stated his readiness and determination to mobilize his fighters to resist the United States and what he called all manifestations of the superpower's arrogance. To him, the United States' attack on Afghanistan was "nothing less than an attack on Islam."²⁶ He conveyed the sarcastic message, "We would like to mourn for America, since you should learn from your own arrogance. For Muslims, we would like to congratulate you for taking revenge in response to terrors committed by the biggest terrorist nation in the world—America—on Muslim nations."²⁷ In a television interview, Thalib boasted that ten thousand of his fighters had been ordered to go to the battlefields in Afghanistan.²⁸

Because of their persistence in criticizing the United States' campaign against terrorism, these groups attracted international attention. They were all suspected of links to Bin Laden. The strongest suspicions were directed against Laskar Mujahidin, which was further implicated by its association with Jama'ah Islamiyah, believed to be an al Qaeda-linked terrorist network operating in Southeast Asia. Jama'ah Islamiyah received particular attention after Malaysian and Singaporean authorities uncovered a plot to bomb the US Embassy and other Western targets in Singapore. Riduan Isamuddin, or Hambali, was suspected of being the principal Jama'ah Islamiyah operative in the region and of having arranged accommodations in Malaysia for Khalid al-Mihdar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, two of the hijackers of the American Airlines jet that crashed into the Pentagon. Subsequently, a number of people suspected of links to Jama'ah Islamiyah were arrested in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. These included Fathur Rahman al-Gozi, Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, Taufik Abdul Halim, Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung, and Abdul Jamal Balfas.²⁹

²⁵ "Relawan Jihad Indonesia Masuk Peshawar," *Republika*, October 9, 2001. According to this report, at that time there had already been three hundred Indonesians in Peshawar who were prepared to cross the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and assist the Taliban.

²⁶ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Mampuslah Amerika," *Bulletin Laskar Jihad* 10 (October 2001): 6; see also Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menyikapi Gertakan Si Pengecut dan Penakut," *Bulletin Laskar Jihad* 11 (November 2001): 6.

²⁷ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Mampuslah Amerika," *Bulletin Laskar Jihad* 10 (October 2001): 9.

²⁸ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Amerika Sedang Menggali Kubur di Afghanistan," interview with Metro-TV, October 8, 2001.

²⁹ Agus Dwikarna was the leader of Laskar Jundullah, a faction of Laskar Mujahidin. He was arrested along with Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jamal Balfas. See "Detained Indonesian is associate of pro-bin Laden cleric: Philippines," AFP, March 17, 2002. While the last two were later released, Dwikarna was sentenced in the Philippines to ten years; see "Agus Dwikarna Divonis 10-17 Tahun," *Republika*, July 13, 2002; see also "Indonesian Linked to Al Qaeda Cell," CNN, July 19, 2002.

A number of international terrorist experts became engaged in discussing the possible linkage between Laskar Mujahidin and al Qaeda. Rohan Gunaratna, for instance, alleged a link by presenting evidence of al Qaeda involvement in terrorist acts in Indonesia.³⁰ Sidney Jones, a researcher at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, issued a report highlighting the linkage and cited the Ngruki *pesantren* as the hub of the Jama'ah Islamiyah network. In this report, Jama'ah Islamiyah is defined as a clandestine regional al Qaeda-linked terrorist organization whose network of supporters extends across a number of Southeast Asian countries and includes the Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, which is a militant group linked to the Partai Aksi Islam se-Malaysia (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Action Party, PAS), the Al-Ma'unah Islamic sect, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and several small groups in Singapore, Thailand, Burma, and probably also Brunei.³¹ Subsequently, Zachary Abuza pointed out that this network was set up in the mid-1990s in Malaysia by Abdullah Sungkar and Ba'asyir in an effort to establish a pan-Islamic republic called "Negara Islam Nusantara" (Archipelagic Islamic State) and incorporating Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand, and the southern Philippines.³² It should be noted, however, that the focus on "terrorism" might prevent these analysts from accurately discerning what the networks and contacts really were about and how the prevalent ideology gradually took shape.

Speculation associating Laskar Mujahidin with al Qaeda became more widespread when bombs exploded at Paddy's Cafe and the Sari Club at Legian, Bali, in October 2002. This tragedy claimed around two hundred lives, wounded other hundreds of people, and destroyed a dozen buildings. Since it was the largest terrorist attack after the September 11 attack, the so-called Bali bombing immediately attracted worldwide attention. The international community condemned the tragedy and the harming of innocent victims. In the months following the tragedy, Amrozi, Ali Ghufron, Ali Imron, Imam Samudera, Abdul Rauf, and other suspects accused of being responsible for the bombing were arrested. They were all believed to be associated with Ba'asyir, who had been detained a week after the explosion. After an initial period of reluctance, these arrests marked the beginning of the anti-terrorist campaign conducted by the government of Megawati, Wahid's successor.

POLITICAL ISLAM AFTER THE NEW ORDER

There is no doubt that the rise of the aforementioned paramilitary groups constitutes the strongest sign of the expansion of political Islam in the political landscape of post-New Order Indonesia. By perpetrating radical actions, these groups not only sounded an alarm signaling the spread of a sort of privatized militancy and violence, but also challenged the legitimacy of the secular system adopted by the Indonesian state, which they perceived as an extension of the Western hegemony responsible for the on-going politico-economic crisis. While

³⁰ Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), pp. 198-203.

³¹ Sidney Jones, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyyah Terrorist Network Operates," *Asia Report* 43 (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2002).

³² Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), pp. 128-39. This book expands on his earlier paper, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24,3 (2002): 427-65.

condemning Indonesia's system of government, they proposed the *shari'a* as an alternative basis for the state and emphasized its superiority to any other system. In so doing, they tried to bring Islam into the center of the discursive field to compete against other ideologies. Both implicitly and explicitly, they shared a desire to see Islam spread not only as a religion, but also as a political, social, economic, and cultural system.

The eruption of Islam in the political arena of post-New Order Indonesia caught the attention of many observers at home and abroad. The main reason for this was because it happened in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, which has generally been associated with a peaceful and tolerant form of Islam. This peculiarity is often connected by historians with the way Islam slowly spread from coastal areas into the hinterlands and replaced the dominant Hindu and Buddhist character of the regimes controlling those kingdoms. In the process of adaptation, some local elements of culture were retained in the new belief system.³³ It is no surprise that despite Islam's demonstrated signs of vitality in the last two decades, currents of thought supporting religious pluralism, democracy, and heightened public participation for women have remained influential throughout the nation. Some scholars perceive Indonesia as a country that continues to develop into the most pluralistic and democracy-friendly nation-state in the entire Muslim world.³⁴

In scholarly work, "political Islam" is used as an umbrella term interchangeably with "Islamism." It figures as an alternative to the term "fundamentalism," which derives from the Christian tradition and is religious in character. Scholars generally apply the term "political Islam" to the discourses and activist projects that conceive of Islam not merely as a religion but also as a political ideology, whereby an Islamic state, or at least an Islamic society characterized by a high respect for and obedience to the *shari'a*, is established. From their perspective, political Islam is a religio-political project that attempts to enable Islam not only to be represented in the state but also to be established as a comprehensive system that regulates all aspects of life. It is thus understood as a form of interaction between religion and politics. As a matter of fact, political Islam has manifested itself in many ways, ranging from the assertion of parochial identity to a full-blooded attempt to reconstruct society based on "Islamic" principles.³⁵

³³ There is abundant literature on the introduction and expansion of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. See, for instance, G. W. J. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 124,4 (1968): 433-59; A. H. Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions," *Indonesia* 19 (1975): 33-35; Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (*Tarekat*) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 1,1 (1994): 1-25; and Peter Riddle, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian: Transmissions and Responses* (London and Singapore: C. Hurst and Horizon Books, 2001).

³⁴ See Robert W. Hefner, "Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia," in *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, ed. Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvath (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), pp. 75-206; Anders Uhlin, *Indonesia and the "Third Wave of Democratization": The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World* (London: Curzon, 1997); and Taufik Abdullah, *Jalan Baru Islam: Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

³⁵ For a detailed discussion about this concept, see Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991). For a comparison, see Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1995); and Ahmad S. Moussalli, ed., *Islamic Fundamentalism: Myths and Realities* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1998).

Political Islam is a contemporary phenomenon in the Muslim world. It began as a movement of thought introduced by Hasan al-Banna (1906-1948), the founding father of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, and by Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1978), the founder of the Jama'at-i Islami (Islamic Community) of Pakistan.³⁶ These two leaders endeavored to define Islam primarily as a political system, in keeping with the major ideologies of the twentieth century. Their ideas have evolved into diverse movements that, during the last decades, have mounted challenges to both Western domination and regimes in the Muslim world. These challenges are essentially the repercussions generated by the failure of ruling regimes in most Muslim countries to follow the development models of their Western allies, resounding, passionate responses particularly triggered by the defeat of the combined Arab forces in the 1967 Arab-Israel War. Following this defeat, many people in the Muslim world began to reexamine and question their lot. Against this backdrop, the slogan "Islam is the solution" was born and gained ground.³⁷

The crucial event in the eruption of political Islam was the urban insurrection known as the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Not only did it exert a powerful influence on other Islamic insurgencies, it thoroughly transformed the collective Muslim imagination regarding what was politically possible using an innovative Islamic discourse articulated, in this case, by Ayatollah Khomeini. Observing developments in the Muslim world in the decades that followed, John L. Esposito wrote in 1992:

Islamic revivalism has ceased to be restricted to small, marginal organizations on the periphery of society and instead has become part of mainstream Muslim society, producing a new class of modern-educated but Islamically oriented elites who work alongside, and at times in coalitions with, their secular counterparts. It is a vibrant, multifaceted movement that will embody the major impact of Islamic revivalism for the foreseeable future. Its goal is the transformation by individuals at the grass-roots level.³⁸

The central questions to be raised here are why political Islam, which adopted violent methods to promulgate its message, erupted and gained ground in Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order regime? How did this phenomenon achieve prominence and what factors contributed to its proliferation? To what extent did it represent resentment triggered by the politico-economic crisis following the regime's collapse? Can it be interpreted simply as a protest action by certain groups who intended to lend their energies to the political interests of a few elites (and, if so, are its attributes specific to the ensuing transitional context)? To what extent can it be connected to the *longue durée* dynamics of the relationship between Islam and the state? And in what way has it to do with the global increase in anti-West sentiment embodied in the September 11 attacks?

³⁶ The main reference work on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is R. P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); and on the Jama'at-i Islami is Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994).

³⁷ See Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1990).

³⁸ John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 23.

While acknowledging that there are many possible, overlapping explanations for this development, the fact that these groups got noticed within a transitional context needs to be specifically underscored. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter have argued that transition is typically a period during which regimented relations in a society become blurred and uncertain because the hegemonic discourse controlled by the state has undergone fragmentation. Many possibilities may be on the horizon, including the emergence of a chaotic situation that paves the way for the return of authoritarian rule. Even if democracy is to some extent manifested, it is frequently followed by uncertainty, since the rules of the game continue to change. The players in an era of transition do not strive simply to fulfill their temporary political ambitions but also to establish control over the state. Within this context, transition, as the two political theorists put it, often stimulates the formation of a coalitional structure linking "exemplary individuals" to societal organizations representing the masses.³⁹

Given the transitional context of the surfacing of these activist Islamic groups in Indonesia, there is almost a consensus among Indonesian observers and analysts that this phenomenon constitutes a distinctively Indonesian form of political syndicalism associated exclusively with the maneuvers of a dominant elite faction eager to protect its political interests in face of opposition. The groups were usually perceived by analysts as tools wielded by unscrupulous political manipulators.⁴⁰ Of course, these speculations cannot be overlooked and, as I shall demonstrate, there are more than enough facts that confirm their plausibility. Yet I will argue that this complicated issue and the roots of the problem cannot be explained or understood solely on the basis of such a conspiracy theory. The same holds true for any uncritical observation that interprets the proliferation of these groups as an extension of the expansion of global terrorism. Such an observation tends to overlook the internal dynamism of the groups in relation to domestic political, social, and cultural changes. One thing is indisputable: this phenomenon should be analyzed within a broad context combining historical, political, and sociological approaches.

THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on Laskar Jihad. The choice was based on the fact that Laskar Jihad emerged as an unequivocally militant Islamic group, impressing much of the country by the willingness of its members to martyr themselves for God. Because of its pioneering calls for jihad in the Moluccas, it has become the most prominent representative of Islamic militancy in post-New Order Indonesia. People were particularly astonished to witness the ranks of young men stating their determination to carry out armed jihad at all costs. This image was reinforced by the readiness of the group to enforce the *rajm* sentence at a time when other existing Islamist groups were still preoccupied with the more general discourse about the

³⁹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD, and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 48-56; see also Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Damien Kingsbury, *The Politics of Indonesia*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 218-29.

need for a comprehensive implementation of the *shari`a*. For these same reasons, the organization was subjected to closer scrutiny by the international community. Evidence of Laskar Jihad's links to the Taliban has raised questions regarding possible ties to al Qaeda.

Furthermore, the attraction of Laskar Jihad is rooted in its ties to the Salafi *da`wa* movement, which had previously developed a "non-political" stance concerned primarily with the purity of the faith and the related moral integrity of individuals. Because of concern with these two issues, the Salafi *da`wa* movement emerged as an exclusive, marginal movement set in opposition to all other Islamist groups, which it accused of being trapped in *hizbiyya* (sectarian-political) tendencies that fostered unbelief. Using the label *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* (Ar. *ahl al-Sunna wa'l jama'a*)—which in the Indonesian context tends to denote traditionalism—it even challenged all kinds of mainstream interpretations of Islam. Its ideology was, in comparison, staunchly conservative, as reflected in its views on women, democracy, and the West. Only after the collapse of the New Order regime did the political implications of this group's program become visible.

What seems particularly intriguing is that, in perpetrating its actions, Laskar Jihad was driven by a firm belief in a worldwide conspiracy led by the United States to undermine Islam and the Muslim *umma*. The battle cries of this group resound with anti-American discourse that accuses Zionist and Christian forces of responsibility for the United States' foreign policies. From the perspective of its members, Muslims are clearly victims of a global conspiracy. Laskar Jihad's membership has claimed to be the only force acting to achieve the freedom of Muslims from intimidation and colonization. Here their identity as Salafis is emphasized, marking Laskar Jihad as a group that consistently follows the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, adheres to religious beliefs and practices, and is free from corruption and contamination by Western culture.

Focusing on Laskar Jihad, this study looks at the origins and anatomy of a radical Islamist group and the process of its emergence in the political arena of Indonesia. To understand the dynamics of this group, it is important to look beyond immediate, contemporary events to the historical context of its proliferation. This historical assessment will provide a perspective on how political Islam has developed, employed strategies, and negotiated power. In addition, we cannot simply examine the dynamics of domestic politics, which have so far dominated the scholarly debates concerning political Islam in Indonesia, if we wish to understand this phenomenon. The development and efflorescence of Laskar Jihad has likewise been determined by the global constellations. As I shall demonstrate in this study, domestic politics have been interwoven with global Muslim politics.

In this discussion, particular attention will be devoted to clarifying how the quest for recognition has determined the evolution of the Salafi "family" associated with Thalib from a quietist community to a paramilitary group. Within the framework of an identity-oriented paradigm, special importance is attached to the process of identity formation in the movement. The concern here is not simply with the interests, motivations, and characteristics shared by the members of the movement, but also with how group identity is developed, communicated, and integrated in a given socio-cultural context. The key to understanding the intricate and intersecting relationships between these variables lies in the dynamics of the competition for the interpretation of religious symbols and the institutions that control them. An understanding of this process provides the foundation for an

analysis of the factors that might have contributed to the Salafi community's shift toward militancy and violence.

Within the framework of social movement theory, which I shall elaborate on later, this study specifically analyzes the process of a social movement's emergence. The benefit of this theory lies particularly in its capacity to provide—on the basis of a rational choice paradigm—insights into the interests of actors and how they choose to mobilize resources. This theory has begun to gain wide acceptance among scholars of political Islam who want to account for the mobilization dynamics that appear to drive Islamic activism.⁴¹ Certainly, the unstable political and economic conditions following the collapse of the New Order regime, which created a transitional context of the sort described by O'Donnell and Schmitter, are taken as a starting point in my analysis of the meanings of Laskar Jihad's transformation. Attention is paid to systematic opportunities and constraints within which such actions take place. The significance of the pre-existing informal social network is underscored because mobilization does not work in a vacuum, but rather through interaction among individuals. At the same time, this discussion will not neglect the role of ideas as precipitating factors in collective actions. This study also deals with how actors frame their activism in an interpretative scheme in order to recruit people, win support, and enhance the credibility of the movement.

Besides trying to answer the question of *how* a radical Islamist group emerged and developed, this study seeks to deal with the question of *why* such a group was formed and maintained. For this purpose, this book attempts to understand to what extent ideological factors have played a role in directing the activism and formation of Laskar Jihad. The basic doctrine of the Salafi movement and the ways it has been shaped by twentieth-century Islamist ideologues are discussed to discover the underlying doctrines of this group. This analysis also examines how the conservative doctrine of the Salafi movement provided the foundation to attract thousands of young people to support calls for jihad in the Moluccas. Understanding this phenomenon helps explain why ideology is so crucial to a social movement.

In addition, this study seeks to expose the sociological factors that successfully encourage young people to offer their lives by enthusiastically joining Laskar Jihad and venturing off to what they call the "battlefield of jihad" in the Moluccas. For this to be done properly, one must delineate as sharply as possible the social composition of the group and the process that led individual members to join. Social composition is useful in identifying social problems that might have contributed to the formation of a radical Islamist group. Social changes arising from the rapid modernization and globalization of the last few decades will be given particular attention in order to connect the issue under consideration to a broader sociological debate.

Using the case of Indonesia, an area that has been relatively neglected, this book sets out to contribute to scholarly debates about political Islam. Based on data gathered through extensive fieldwork, complemented by theoretical assessments, this study provides an empirically rich analysis of how political Islam takes form and emerges in a given society and period of time. Its main contribution lies in its attempt to link research on this issue to broader social movement theory and related analyses. The fact that very few studies attempt to do this leaves Islamic movements

⁴¹ Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), see also Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Conceptualizing Islamic Activism," *ISIM Newsletter* 14 (2004): 34-35.

isolated from the plethora of useful discoveries made possible by developments in this theoretical field. At the same time, this study tries to provide new ground for the enrichment of social movement theory and to shift the focus of Islamic movement research from ideology to issues having to do with organization.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

This study combines theoretical and empirical investigations. The sources for these investigations were collected through bibliographical study and fieldwork. I consulted books, articles, academic theses, and research reports from a number of academic libraries and research institutions and also investigated relevant documentation and media, particularly newspapers, magazines and the Internet. Of particular importance were publications issued by Laskar Jihad itself, which include books, magazines, pamphlets, and internal documents. A discourse analysis of speeches, informal talks, and public sermons by Laskar Jihad leaders, some of which have been recorded on cassette, also forms a crucial part of this exercise.

The main sources for this book were two stints of intensive fieldwork that took place over a period of eighteen months. I visited a number of cities, including Jakarta, Bandung, Cirebon, Semarang, Salatiga, Solo, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar, focusing on the main headquarters of Laskar Jihad and its provincial and district branches. These visits afforded opportunities to conduct surveys and record participant observations. After first explicitly explaining my position as a researcher, I engaged in in-depth interviews and informal conversations with group leaders, activists, members, sympathizers, and other social actors linked to this group. Observation was not always easy, as group members felt uneasy about outsiders and were suspicious that I might have a "hidden agenda." However, "listening" to them and participating in their collective prayers and religious gatherings helped to overcome these obstacles. I also paid attention to the main areas where Salafis tended to congregate. Observation of these areas contributed to an understanding of the daily social lives of the Salafis.

To choose respondents, I used a random-sampling technique and interviewed more than one hundred Laskar Jihad members thus chosen. To avoid any bias, the distribution of respondents according to area, age, social background, and position in the organization was taken into account. These interviews aimed to gather information of the group's history, composition, structure, and forms of action. As action is a process whose meanings are constructed through interaction, the actors themselves were not the subjects of analysis; rather, they produced the subject of analysis and supplied its meaning. I also inquired into the life histories of individual members to learn about their experiences before joining Laskar Jihad. This is particularly crucial in exploring the social composition of the group and the factors that encouraged individual members to engage in jihad in the Moluccas.

In addition, I visited Ambon to observe the presence of Laskar Jihad in its main zone of jihad operation in the Moluccas, especially around its headquarters and other locations that preserve the footprints of this group. I investigated the social settings of the Laskar Jihad operation in the Moluccas and its interactions with local Muslims so that a better understanding of this group's engagement in the Moluccan conflict could be achieved. Relevant facts were gathered through interviews with Laskar Jihad fighters, common people, local militia members, and leaders of Muslim and Christian communities.

I contacted a number of institutions and organizations to discover the relationships between Laskar Jihad and other Islamic groups. These included LIPIA and Middle Eastern foundations or their local collaborators operating in Jakarta, including Hai'at al-Ighatha li'l 'Alam al-Islami, Haramayn, Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, and Al-Sofwah. To complete these observations, visits were made to a number of Muslim organizations and university-based Islamic associations, notably the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, al-Irsyad, Persis, Muhammadiyah, the Salahuddin Community of the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the Salman Mosque of the Institute of Technology in Bandung, and the Campus *Da'wa* Council of the Hasanuddin University in Makassar.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book consists of six chapters. Chapter I deals with the origin of Laskar Jihad and its relations with the Salafi movement, which began to develop in the mid-1980s. This discussion explores the movement's expansion, the factors that fueled it, the dynamics of state-Islam relations that formed its domestic context, and developments and dynamics at the transnational level that help determine Muslim politics at the local level. Subsequently, this chapter examines the issues of agency and strategy in establishing an exclusive current of Islamic activism that attracted many followers among university students and people outside the campus domains.

Chapter II discusses the rise of Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad, in the Salafi movement. His background and engagement in and influence on the movement are examined. Thus this chapter seeks to reveal the background of a radical Islamist leader by considering his personal experience, ethnicity, and social network. His participation in jihad in Afghanistan and quest for religious knowledge in the Middle East are explored. This chapter analyzes his attempt to position himself as the movement's leading "sacred" authority by using the *Sururiyya* issue, which was related to the repudiation by the Muslim Brotherhood activists of the presence of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Finally, this chapter addresses how competition for the sacred authority gave birth to an informal social network, the Ihyaus Sunnah, which later evolved into FKAJ.

Chapter III deals with the transformation of the Ihyaus Sunnah into the Laskar Jihad paramilitary organization, beginning with a discussion about social movement theories through which the transformation can be understood. The complexity of the transitional situation following the collapse of the New Order regime is described in order to show the context that enabled such a transformation to take place. Laskar Jihad's emergence was directly connected to the escalation of the Moluccan conflict; therefore, this chapter analyzes how the conflict provided the arena conducive to Laskar Jihad's actions. It also discusses how Laskar Jihad framed its own actions when launching its jihad mission in the Moluccas and how their messages were connected to much broader national and international issues. As Laskar Jihad received legitimacy for its actions from the fatwas (religious legal opinions) of the Middle Eastern *ulama*, the significance of these fatwas for the formation of the group is examined. No less significant, this chapter examines the role of the pre-existing network in determining the direction of the movement.

Chapter IV expounds on the ideology of the Salafi movement and explains how this ideology contributed to the success of Laskar Jihad in calling for jihad in the

Moluccas. To understand this issue, the basic doctrinal position of the movement, which is predicated upon society's reaffirmation and acceptance of precepts in the Qur'an and the Sunna, is first examined. Subsequently, the chapter looks at how such belief led the movement to position *tawhid* (the Oneness of God) as the means through which to understand the world. What seems intriguing in this context is how this particular world-view was isolated from its natural political contents, which generated an ideology that seems at a glance apolitical and non-revolutionary. Finally, this chapter looks at how this "apolitical ideology" shifted and provided the foundation for Laskar Jihad.

Chapter V explores the sociology of Laskar Jihad, beginning with an examination of the group's social composition. Particular attention is devoted to the cadres and masses who formed the backbone of the Laskar Jihad mission in the Moluccas. The social, educational, and economic backgrounds of these people are examined to reveal the social roots that encouraged their engagement. Within this context, the processes of rapid modernization and globalization, which often present paradoxes to the large section of the population increasingly marginalized by them, are analyzed. This chapter finally examines how these people try to solve the problems posed by their own situations relative to these processes.

Chapter VI analyzes the jihad actions of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas and the meaning behind these actions in relation to the group's struggle to negotiate its identity. Thousands of Laskar Jihad members arrived in the islands, and close study of their actions shows to what extent their success depended on the significant support from external powers. This chapter also provides an analysis of the group's role in the Moluccan conflict. No less important are the tactics employed to conduct its jihad actions and reach its strategic goals. Further, this chapter examines the political constellation that changed the direction and sustainability of the group's actions, and it addresses problems resulting from the presence of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas in the aftermath of the September 11. The chapter ends with an analysis of the group's disbanding.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EXPANSION OF “SALAFIS”

The origins of Laskar Jihad can be traced back to the mid-1980s, when the expansion of the Salafi communities was becoming visible and assertive in Indonesia. Its signs were first and foremost strikingly seen in the appearance of young men wearing long flowing robes (*jalabiyya*), turbans (*imama*), trousers right to their ankles (*isbal*), and long beards (*lihya*), and women wearing a form of enveloping black veil (*niqab*) in public places of various cities in Indonesia, including Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang, Bandung, Jakarta, and Makassar. Their presence was significantly felt, as they were inclined to stand distinctly apart from the “anything goes” open society around them. By organizing themselves into small, tight-knit, exclusive communities, they showed their enthusiasm for reviving and imitating the exemplary pattern set by the Prophet Muhammad and the first generation of his followers, a community generally perceived as having embodied pristine, ideal Islam. It is apparent that they sought to offer an alternative model of society that was distinctly different from the modern Western model and intended to counter what they perceived as rampant Westernization.

The efflorescence of the Salafi communities has marked a new trend in Islamic activism in Indonesia. Even while displaying their distinctive identity and their ambition to return to what they called “pure Islam,” as practiced by the *Salaf al-Salih* (pious ancestors), they adopted a stance of apolitical quietism.¹ Their main concern has to do with the purity of *tawhid* and a number of other issues centered on the call for a revival of strict religious practice that would develop and guard the moral integrity of individuals. Seemingly trivial issues, such as the wearing of *jalabiyya*, *imama*, *lihya*, *isbal* and *niqab*, have constituted the main themes in their day-to-day discussions. A commitment to wear the *jalabiyya* by men and the *niqab* by women, for instance, has been viewed as much more important than taking part in political activities. Salafi adherents believe that Muslim society must first be Islamized through a gradual evolutionary process that includes education (*tarbiya*) and purification (*tasfiya*) before the comprehensive implementation of the *shari'a* can be

¹ The prototype of these communities to a large extent resembles what Olivier Roy refers to as neo-fundamentalism, which he defines as a non-revolutionary Islamic movement that attempts to re-Islamize society at the grassroots level without being formed within an Islamic state. In his analysis, he contends that this phenomenon arose from the failure of Islamism, a modern political Islamic movement that claims to re-create a true Muslim society by creating a new Islamic order through revolutionary and militant political action. See Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 25; cf. Gilles Kepel, *La Revanche de Dieu: Chrétiens, juifs, et musulmans à la reconquête du monde* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1991). Despite its strengths in providing insights through which to understand the late-twentieth-century evolution of political Islam, this theory has been criticized. In reality, political Islamic movements have never undergone a profound transformation from revolutionary to social modes of action. Both tendencies have constantly coexisted, and the choice of a certain mode has very often been determined by political constraints. See Francois Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 54–57.

realized. To reach this end, they have been fervently committed to *da'wa* activities (from the Arabic root *da'a*, to call, which generally refers to the proselytizing that is incumbent upon every Muslim), participating in the establishment of *halqas* and *dauras*.²

There is no doubt that the phenomenon under discussion developed as the consequence of the expansion of the worldwide contemporary Salafi *da'wa* movement representing the most puritanical sect of Islam, Wahhabism. This designation may cause some confusion, since in older academic parlance Wahhabism is usually distinguished from Salafism. It is a term that denotes the reformist notions developed by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), who drew inspiration from the teachings of Taqiy al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). He was a follower of Hanbalism, the strictest of the four legal schools of Sunni Islam.³ The reformist notions of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab first developed into a doctrine and gained force in the eighteenth century when they inspired a movement that set out to fight the superstitions and *sufi* devotional practices prevalent in Arab society, which were designated by al-Wahhab's followers as examples of *bid'a* (unwholesome innovations), and to attack those who claimed to be Muslim but whose behavior was considered un-Islamic. Defined by John O. Voll as a "prototype of rigorous fundamentalism in the modern Islamic experience," this movement took a hard line in defining who could be regarded as a believer, stating that no deviation from the *shari'a* was permitted, and it drew a firm distinction between the world of believers and that of unbelievers.⁴ In addition, it strongly rejected *taqlid* (blind imitation of medieval scholarly authorities) by establishing the Qur'an and the Sunna as the two fundamental and binding sources of Islamic faith and law.

What is generally known as Salafism arose nearly one century after Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab had succeeded in exerting his influence throughout the Arabian Peninsula. It is identical to the reformist, modernist notions disseminated by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1898), Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), and Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935). Unlike their predecessors, these thinkers did not content themselves with appealing to Muslims to purify Islam of all kinds of *bid'a* and *taqlid*. As was apparent in their calls for Muslims to open the doors of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), they also advocated the adoption of modern progress, which was believed to be necessary for regaining the lost triumph of Islam. They argued that notions of Western-style scientific rationalization—the foundation of modern progress—were already encapsulated in the "pure" Islam. The arguments that favored combining Islam and modern science in turn provided the basis for modernism in Islam, one that was significantly distinguishable from Wahhabism. Since the growth of Salafism went hand-in-hand with the rise of Muslim political consciousness in the face of Western colonization, an obsession with the

² *Halqa*, literally meaning "circle," is a forum for the study of Islamic sciences, in which an *ustadh*, a teacher or preacher, gives lessons based on certain books and his participants sit around him to hear and scrutinize his lessons. It is distinct from *daura*, literally meaning "turn," which is a type of workshop held for a period ranging from one week to one month, during which its participants gather and stay in one place and follow all the designed programs.

³ For a detailed discussion about this figure, see Samira Haj, "Reordering Islamic Orthodoxy: Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahab," *The Muslim World* 92,3-4 (2002): 333-70.

⁴ John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 53-56.

reconstruction of the Muslim *umma* and the Islamic caliphate was inherent in this movement and left its mark on the dynamics of Muslim politics throughout the twentieth century.⁵

The contemporary Salafi movement can be called a form of reconstituted Wahhabism owing to the determination of its proponents to codify and follow more systematically the thoughts formulated by the three main classical writers among Wahhabis, namely Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350), and Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab. Also, followers often refer to the fatwas issued by contemporary Wahhabi authorities, such as `Abd al-`Aziz `Abd Allah bin Baz (1912-1999), and Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999). While this movement is firmly associated with the global Islamic resurgence, it has also inherited some aspects of Salafism, notably its anti-Western sentiments, which inspired the birth of twentieth-century Islamist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama`at-i Islami (Islamic Community). It is therefore appropriate to examine how the contemporary Salafi *da'wa* movement has developed in Indonesia and formed an exclusive current of Islamic activism. What factors have contributed to its proliferation?

ISLAMIC REFORM IN INDONESIA

In terms of its desire for a return to the model of the *Salaf al-Salih*, the contemporary Salafi movement is by no means new. Although Indonesia is located on the periphery of the Muslim world, since the first half of the nineteenth century it has witnessed the expansion of reformist notions, dramatically marked by the eruption of the Padri movement in West Sumatra.⁶ This movement had been brought back to the region by Indonesians who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajis*). The ideas of those advocating Islamic reform later became more clearly articulated with the spread of the Salafism of Muhammad `Abduh and Rashid Rida, which inspired the rise of a number of Muslim reformist, modernist organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, Persis), in the first quarter of the twentieth century. These movements actively championed the calls for a return to the Qur'an and Sunna and a detachment from various traditional practices deemed to be tainted with *bid'a*, *takhayyul* (superstitions), and *khurafa* (myths, superstitions).⁷ Alongside this campaign, they laid the foundation for the younger generation by developing Western-style schools and encouraging the teaching of modern subjects.

The emergence of the reformist, modernist organizations challenged the traditional *`ulama* control over the religious corpus. It is therefore understandable

⁵ On the evolution of Islamic modernism, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁶ For a discussion of this movement, see Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy, Central Sumatra, 1784-1847* (London and Malmo: Curzon Press and Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, 1983).

⁷ Although there are many books dealing with the emergence of these Muslim modernist movements, the pioneering study made by Deliar Noer remains important. See Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973). On the transmission of Islamic modernism from the Middle East to Indonesia, see Michael F. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

that leading *kyais*, traditional *ʿulama* in Java, responded to the expansion by spearheading the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama (Awakening of Religious Scholars) in 1926.⁸ They were undeniably influential figures among traditionalist, conservative Muslims, whose affiliation with one school of Islamic law, *madhhab*, particularly the Shafiʿite, was fundamental. The *kyais* were the main points of reference throughout these debates, as they were imbued with legitimacy as the interpreters of the *madhhab* doctrines, and their mastery of the *kitab kuning* (yellow books, referring to classical Arabic texts) provided the foundation of their authority. The position of the *kyais* was usually supported by the presence of the *pesantrens*, rural-based Islamic learning centers where students studied Arabic and Islamic subjects using the *kitab kuning*. In many instances, the *pesantren* appeared to represent an exemplary Islamic center, with the *kyai* as its central figure who usually enjoyed the respect and loyalty of his disciples and the other people surrounding him.⁹

The fragmentation of religious authority that arose from the expansion of the reformist, modernist organizations imparted a striking character to the immense and complex diversity of Indonesian Islam. It is relevant in this context to mention the concept introduced by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who divides Javanese society—the majority of Indonesian Muslims—into *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi*.¹⁰ The term *santri* is applied to puritanical Muslims committed to a more or less normative profession of the faith, as opposed to the *abangan*, nominal Muslims, who felt comfortable with local customs influenced by Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The former are associated with urban traders concentrated along the northern coast and the latter with peasants in rural areas. The term *priyayi* refers to aristocratic bureaucrats of the Javanese courts, the bearers of the mystical court traditions, who, in the Geertzian paradigm, are close to the *abangan*. Some scholars have criticized this theory, arguing that while the first two categories are based on a personal commitment to Islamic doctrines, the last denotes a separate hierarchically determined social group that can be contrasted only with the common people. Accordingly, the basic division into the *santri* and *abangan* can also be applied to the *priyayi* group.¹¹

⁸ Concerning this organization, see Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1994); see also Greg Barton and Greg Fealy, eds., *Nahdlatul Ulama: Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash Asia Institute, 1996).

⁹ For a further account on the *kyai* and the *pesantren*, see Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, 1999). On the *kitab kuning*, see Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146 (1990): 226-69.

¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).

¹¹ For the criticism of this theory, see Koentjaraningrat, "Review of Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York, 1960)," *Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia* 1 (1961): 188-92; Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), pp. 12-13; Zaini Muchtarom, *Santri dan Abangan di Jawa* (Jakarta: INIS, 1988); and Huub de Jonge, "Western and Indonesian Views on the Abangan-Santri Division in Javanese Society: The Perception of Geertz's 'The Religion of Java,'" in *The Politics of Ethnographic Reading and Writing: Confrontations of Western and Indigenous Views*, ed. Henk Driessen, (Saarbrücken, Fort Lauderdale: Verlag Breitenbach, 1993), pp. 101-23.

It is the *santri*'s concern with the formal, orthodox variant of Islam that, Geertz argues, distinguishes them from the *abangan*, who are devoted to the communal feasts that revolve around *slametan*. In a *slametan*, which constitutes the core of *abangan* ritual practice, all kinds of invisible beings are invited to sit together with the other participants and share the same food.¹² For the *santri*, the belief in the presence of invisible beings in this ritual represents the profound influences of Hinduism and Buddhism still present, influences that they believe should be eliminated. The criticism of the prevailing religious syncretism eventually led to a split within the ranks of the *santri* themselves, creating groups which Geertz categorizes as *kolot* and *moderen*. These are, in fact, identical to the categories whose members are characterized as traditionalists and modernists, respectively. The *kolot* are more willing to allow some non-Islamic rites a minor place in their religious observance, while the *moderen* work assiduously to expunge non-Islamic elements completely in favor of a purified Islam. Having made the above distinction, Geertz asserts that it is no accident that the *kolot* are closer to the *abangan*.¹³

Notwithstanding the importance of this concept, the reality in the field seems much more complex. Javanese society has been as dynamic as any other, and the relationship between those defined as *santri* and those defined as *abangan* has actually varied greatly over time, so that categorizations have never been conceptually clear cut. As observed by a number of scholars, in line with the penetration of modernization deeper into the hinterlands of Java, there has been a growing tendency among Javanese people towards Islamic orthodoxy, and thus, the blurring of the real distinction between the *abangan* and *santri*.¹⁴ Yet in spite of this fact, even today the *abangan* apparently still form the majority of the population. Consequently, the discourse on Islamization is not fading away and always provides grounds for argument. In fact, it is intensifying as Indonesia becomes increasingly integrated into the Muslim world.¹⁵

The inherently antagonistic relations between the *santri* and *abangan* are reflected in the historical records of Indonesian politics. At the dawn of the Indonesian nation-state, the Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Assembly, Masyumi) was set up by the Japanese officials of the Occupation in 1943 in an effort to mobilize Muslim support.¹⁶ In the run-up toward independence, this assembly spearheaded the struggle of Muslim leaders to implement what was later known as the Jakarta Charter to act as the foundation for the would-be Indonesian state. But their struggle ended in failure, defeated by the opposition of secular

¹² Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, pp. 121-30.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

¹⁴ See Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson, AZ: Association for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1989); M. Bambang Pranowo, "Islam and Party Politics in Rural Java," *Studia Islamika-Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1,2 (1994): 1-19; and Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese Religion: An Anthropological Account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 240-41.

¹⁵ See Martin van Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam," *Southeast Asian Studies* 37,2 (1999): 158-75.

¹⁶ The most comprehensive book dealing with this period remains Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1958). For a comparison, see Benedict Anderson, *Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961).

abangan nationalists and like-minded leaders who preferred a secular republican model based on the Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945. As a result, many Muslim leaders felt betrayed.¹⁷ During the final years of the Indonesian revolution, the first serious challenge to the Indonesian secular republican model emerged when Kartosuwirjo, as mentioned earlier, proclaimed an independent Islamic state in West Java. This rebellion was triggered by an agreement between the Sukarno government and the Dutch that forced all armed forces, including guerrilla groups, to withdraw to Central Java.¹⁸

The Masyumi that had transformed itself into a political party in the early years of independence fragmented in 1952 when the Nahdlatul Ulama decided to become an independent political party. Both participated in the first general election in 1955, winning the second and third largest number of votes, respectively, after the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party, PNI).¹⁹ With this result, the Masyumi again tried to propose the *shari`a* as the fundamental law of the state, but this attempt also failed because of the resolute rejection by secular nationalists, army technocrats, and socialists who were all united in their opposition to any form of Islamic governance. After some of its leaders were accused of taking part in the largely Sumatran Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia, PRRI) rebellion, the Masyumi was banned and expelled from the political arena of Indonesia in 1960.²⁰

SAUDI ARABIAN GEOPOLITICS

The proliferation of the Salafi *da`wa* movement is inexorably associated with the rising influence of Saudi Arabia in the global politics of the Muslim world. As the place where the Masjid al-Haram (the Grand Mosque) of Mecca and the Masjid al-Nabawi (the Prophet Mosque) of Medina are located, the Kingdom has constantly sought to place itself at the center of the Muslim world, bolstered by its position as *Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn*, the guardian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries. For this purpose, it forged an alliance with—and to some extent co-opted—Wahhabism. In fact, the origin of what we can call the first Saudi Arabian state was born out of a sacred alliance between Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad ibn Sa`ud (r. 1747-1765), a local prince in Nejd. Its existence was short-lived, as in 1819 this state was crushed by the Egyptian forces of the Ottoman Empire. Wahhabism remained marginalized until the rise of `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Sa`ud (d. 1953) at the beginning of the twentieth century. He created a nation-state by relying on a combination of force

¹⁷ In the Jakarta Charter there is a stipulation that requires Muslims to conform to the *shari`a*, a requirement that would place the state unequivocally behind Islam. This stipulation was removed from the Pancasila, whose first principle simply contains the words "Believe in One God [*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*]." The best reference dealing with this issue is B. J. Bolland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).

¹⁸ See Horikoshi, "The Dar-ul-Islam Movement of West Java," pp. 59-86, and Van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam*.

¹⁹ For more information about this election, see Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Politics of 1955* (Ithaca, NY: CMIP, Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1971).

²⁰ On this rebellion, see James Mossman, *Rebels in Paradise: Indonesia's Civil War* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961).

and ideological mobilization based on Wahhabism.²¹ In effect, Wahhabism was subsequently enshrined as a state religion and the *ʿulama* became *de facto* agents of the state who are always prepared to provide tacit approval and, when requested, public sanction for the Saudi rulers' decisions in potentially controversial issues.²²

ʿAbd al-ʿAziz ibn Saʿud played an enormously important role in initiating an effort to position Saudi Arabia at the center of the Muslim world and preparing the ground for the sustainability of this position. In 1926 he organized the Muslim World Congress, whose aim was to forge solidarity between Islamic countries. After the Second World War, Saudi Arabia advocated the promulgation of Wahhabism throughout the Muslim world by adopting this goal as a major plank in its foreign policy, particularly to counter the expansion of Arab Socialist Nationalism launched by the then-President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser. This policy brought Saudi Arabia into the Western bloc led by the United States, which was engaged in a Cold War with the Soviet Union-led communist bloc.²³ In 1957, Saudi Arabia sponsored the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the purpose of which was to formulate the foreign policy of the Muslim world. Five years later, it set up the Rabitat al-ʿAlam al-Islami (the Muslim World League, RAI), following a conference of Muslim scholars in Mecca. This organization worked to institutionalize its influence in cultural and religious activities all over the Muslim world.²⁴

The rise of the Rabitat al-ʿAlam al-Islami has contributed a great deal to the further spread of Saudi Arabian influence, which has steadily gained momentum since the beginning of the 1970s. This development is related to Saudi Arabia's success in gaining an increasingly crucial position in the Muslim world, particularly in Middle East, as a result of the defeat of Muslim countries in the 1967 Arab-Israel War.²⁵ Its position became more crucial after world oil prices skyrocketed, an event that provided considerable economic benefits for Saudi Arabia.²⁶ To spread its influence, Saudi Arabia urged the Rabitat al-ʿAlam al-Islami to act as its philanthropic agent in the liberal distribution of money for the construction of mosques, Islamic schools, and social facilities, as well as to fund *daʿwa* activities for Islamic organizations all over the world.²⁷

²¹ Concerning the origins of Saudi rule, see James Piscatori, "Ideological Politics in Saʿudi Arabia," in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James Piscatori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 56-63. For a more comprehensive account, see Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia, 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²² Joseph Nevo, "Religion and National Identity in Saudi Arabia," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34,3 (1998): 34-53.

²³ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, trans. Anthony Roberts (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 46.

²⁴ On these two organizations, see Saad S. Khan, *Reasserting International Islam: A Focus on the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Other Islamic Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); see also Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, pp. 72-75.

²⁵ Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change*, pp. 295-96; Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, p. 69.

²⁶ Cary Fraser, "In Defense of Allah's Realm: Religion and Statecraft in Saudi Foreign Policy Strategy," in *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, ed. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), p. 222.

²⁷ Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus in 20. Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 215-16; see also Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, p. 72.

In tandem with the growth in Saudi Arabian influence, the Muslim world has witnessed an Islamic resurgence marked by the proliferation of Islamist ideas developed by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at-i Islami, respectively. The ideological vacuum caused by the perceived failure of nationalist regimes following the Arabs' defeat in the 1967 war boosted the popularity of their interpretations. Alongside the slogan of "Islam is the solution," the concept of *jahiliyya* as interpreted by Qutb quickly gained wide currency. According to him, this concept, which originally referred to the period before Islam, accurately describes the situation of the Muslim populace under the nationalist regimes as being in a state of ignorance and barbarism. This interpretation prompted Islamists to resist the established order and devise actions that were aimed to overturn and transform it.²⁸

Saudi Arabia played an important role in the consolidation of Islamist ideology. In the context of the fight against Nasser's Socialist Nationalism, Saudi Arabia provided a haven for members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood who had escaped arrest following Qutb's execution in 1966. From Arabian soil, Islamist ideas were spread throughout the world. Consonant with its opposition to the revolutionary and anti-imperialist orientation of the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia has favored the non-revolutionary wing of this organization led by Hasan al-Hudaybi and 'Umar al-Talmasani. Both have rejected the *takfir* doctrine (which advocates excommunicating the sovereign considered apostate) propounded by Qutb and opted to pursue Islamization from below rather than embrace the revolutionary strategy of attempting to overthrow the government.²⁹ In addition, Saudi Arabia has forged a close relationship with the Jama'at-i Islami, which has likewise rejected the revolutionary mode of politics while criticizing Western democracy.³⁰

The role of Saudi Arabia in global politics faced a serious challenge when the Iranian Revolution erupted in 1979 and brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power.³¹ The success of this revolution provided a model—indeed, a veritable blueprint—for the establishment of the kind of Islamic state that had long been dreamed of by Islamists all over the world.³² Saudi Arabia was haunted by the speculation that such a revolution would possibly wipe out its own monarchy. This anxiety was to some extent justified, as became apparent when the Grand Mosque of Mecca was taken over by a group of people led by Juhayman al-'Utaybi in November 1979, an event followed by a series of Shi'ite demonstrations.³³ The challenge posed by the Iranian Revolution became more apparent when Khomeini proposed that Mecca and Medina

²⁸ Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 131.

²⁹ For these developments, see Gilles Kepel, *Prophet and Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

³⁰ S. V. R. Nasr, "Islamic Opposition in the Political Process: Lessons from Pakistan," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*, ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 137.

³¹ Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2003), pp. 112-16.

³² For a further account on this revolution, see Michael J. Fischer, *From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). For a comparison, see Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

³³ Regarding opposition movements in Saudi Arabia, see Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissents* (London: McMillan, 1999); see also Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom*, pp. 106-08.

be granted international status.³⁴ Saudi Arabia tried hard to limit the devastating effects of the revolution. At the domestic level, it sought to prove its commitment to Islam by imposing a stricter enforcement of religious laws. At the international level, it broadcast and sought to intensify the spread of anti-Shi'ite sentiments.³⁵

The intensification of Wahhabi influence all over the world—which also means the expansion of non-revolutionary Islamic activism—can therefore be seen as a direct reaction to the success of the Iranian Revolution. This revolution did indeed awaken ruling regimes in the Muslim world to the threat of revolutionary Islamic activism that was developing within their respective territorial borders. Consequently, activists in Islamic political movements were subjected to state repression and coercion by a number of regimes, a situation that engendered frustration among the activists. As Saudi Arabia worked to restrict the domain of Islamic political activism arising from these changing political conditions, it simultaneously cleared space that it could use to further spread Wahhabism.

DEWAN DAKWAH ISLAMIYAH INDONESIA (DDII)

The inflow of Saudi Arabian influence has come to Indonesia mainly through the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, DDII), a *da'wa* organization set up by Muhammad Natsir (1908-1993) and other former Masyumi leaders in 1967. The catalysts for the establishment of this organization were the various political impasses that had blocked their ambition to play politics, particularly in relation to their demands for the rehabilitation of the Masyumi and the implementation of the Jakarta Charter. Suharto, who replaced Sukarno as president of Indonesia in 1966 following the alleged abortive coup of the Indonesian Communist Party, rejected these demands and resolutely implemented a strategy of development and modernization, leaving essentially no room for the involvement of religious organizations in his government. This rejection marked the beginning of an era of marginalization of Muslim politics by Suharto, reinforcing the policies of the preceding Sukarno regime.

It can be plausibly inferred that the decision of the former Masyumi leaders to establish DDII was a strategic choice made to extricate themselves from this political impasse and, at the same time, avoid Suharto's pressure.³⁶ DDII was initially concerned with the publication of a series of religious homilies. To negotiate diplomatically with the Suharto regime, which remained suspicious of it, DDII adopted various strategies. One was to mobilize religious preachers all over Indonesia to hear briefings by government officials about Suharto's policies.³⁷ More importantly, DDII immediately associated itself with Saudi Arabia, which was still engaged in its struggle against the remaining forces allied with Nasser's Socialist Nationalism. From its inception, it became the Indonesian representative of the

³⁴ On the contestation between Iran and Saudi following the Khomeini revolution, see Fraser, "In Defense of Allah's Realm," pp. 226-34.

³⁵ See Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2002), pp. 148-49.

³⁶ In relation to the establishment of this organization, Natsir has said, "Previously we carried out *da'wa* through politics, but now we run politics through *da'wa*." See Muhammad Natsir, *Politik Melalui Jalur Dakwah* (Jakarta: Abadi, 1998), p. 22.

³⁷ Lukman Hakiem and Tamsil Linrung, eds., *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah: Dokumentasi Perjalanan 30 Tahun Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (Jakarta: DDII, 1997), pp. 18-21.

Rabitat al-`Alam al-Islami.³⁸ This linkage reinforced the very existence of DDII in Suharto's view, since the president was trying equally hard to eradicate the remaining forces of alleged communists. In the context of its campaign against communism, the New Order encouraged religious observance by requiring students at all levels of education to take courses in religious instruction. Paradoxically, while encouraging the promotion of personal piety, the New Order sought to increase its restrictive control of Islamic political expression.³⁹

Having been endorsed in its position, DDII began to take on sensitive issues. Since the beginning of the 1970s, it has demonstrated its concern that the spread of Christianity was threatening the existence of Islam in Indonesia. The straw that broke the camel's back was the mass conversion to Christianity by former communists fleeing pursuit by the Indonesian military, which had joined forces with activists from Muslim organizations. Missionary organizations, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, opened their doors to these political refugees.⁴⁰ Speculations then arose in DDII circles about the threat of the Christian domination of Indonesian politics. DDII believed that Ali Moertopo, Suharto's most trusted advisor, who was often claimed to be the "architect" of the New Order, worked hand-in-glove with a group of Chinese Roman Catholic political activists and intellectuals assembled in the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and intent on promoting Christians to prominent positions in the military and civilian bureaucracy.⁴¹

Following the eruption of the global Islamic resurgence in the 1970s, DDII sought to popularize Islamist themes. Through the network of Muslim preachers and mosques, it spread the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at-i Islami, represented by the writings of such influential Islamist ideologues as Banna, Qutb, Mawdudi, Sayyid Hawwa, and Mustafa al-Siba'i. This propagation of ideas partly inspired the birth of a younger generation of radicalized militants unwilling to compromise with the state authority. Fueled by the spirit of the global Islamic resurgence, DDII gradually grew more bold and dared to criticize openly the policies of the Suharto regime, particularly through the pages of its daily, *Abadi*. Nevertheless, its ambition to enter the political arena was soon countered by an increasingly repressive policy pursued by Suharto, congruent with the New Order's hostility toward political Islam. The organization felt its impact directly when *Abadi* was banned in 1974.

After the 1971 general election that gave an absolute victory to the ruling faction, Golongan Karya (Functionalist Group, Golkar), Suharto explicitly intensified the marginalization of political Islam by implementing the "parties fusion" policy.⁴² This policy obliged all Muslim parties to be fused into one, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP), just as the nationalist and Christian

³⁸ Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus*, p. 260.

³⁹ Ruth McVey, "Faith as the Outsider: Islam in Indonesian Politics," in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 199-225.

⁴⁰ Robert W. Hefner, "Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims," *Indonesia* 64 (October 1997): 83-84.

⁴¹ Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia* (Blackburn [Sydney]: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 101-02.

⁴² For a further account on the developments around this issue, see Abdul Aziz Thaba, *Islam dan Negara dalam Politik Order Baru* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996). See also Martin van Bruinessen, "Islamic State or State Islam? Fifty Years of State-Islam Relations in Indonesia," in *Indonesien Am Ende Des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ingrid Wessel (Hamburg: Abera, 1996), pp. 19-34.

parties were fused into the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party, PDI). To shore up his policy, Suharto popularized development jargon and imposed the Pancasila as the state's governing doctrine. Any aspirations that challenged the Pancasila could be easily labeled either "left extreme" or "right extreme"; the Anti-Subversive Act inherited from Sukarno was used by the state to justify its methods. Through the indoctrination program called the *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (Guide to Comprehension and Practice of the Pancasila, P4), among other instruments, the Pancasila was systematically embedded in the minds of Indonesia's citizens. The spread of the Pancasila doctrine served to isolate dissidents from both the "left" and "right" and posed the constant threat of surveillance, in Foucauldian terms, replacing a less subtle form of control: domination of the body.⁴³

Resistance to this discouraging and distressing situation flared in the form of uprisings. A group called Komando Jihad (Jihad Commando), led by Ismail Pranoto, perpetrated bombing attacks in Java and Sumatra; another led by Abdul Qadir Djaelani and calling itself "Pola Perjuangan Revolusioner Islam" (the Model of Revolutionary Islamic Struggle) stormed the building of the People's Consultative Council's Assembly during its general session in March 1978. No less important was a series of murders and robberies committed by a band of radicals led by M. Warman, known as "Terror Warman," and the attacks of a group led by Imran M. Zein, aimed at a number of government facilities, that culminated in the hijacking of a Garuda Indonesia airplane on March 28, 1981. Led by West Javanese Darul Islam veterans who had initially been employed by Moertopo's intelligence operators to destroy communism, these groups acted for a common cause: namely, to revolt against Suharto and establish an Islamic state.⁴⁴ Yet Suharto remained undeterred and consistently wiped them out by force. Following the Tanjung Priok affair on September 12, 1984, which killed at least nine people and wounded more than fifty demonstrators who had gathered to demand the release of their colleagues, Suharto even applied the Mass Organization and Political Bill, which required all mass organizations and political parties to accept the Pancasila as the *asas tunggal* (the sole foundation), thus forbidding Islam from being used as the basis for any organization. This bill was ratified in 1985.⁴⁵

Suharto's steadfast determination to marginalize Muslim politics and wipe out its radical expressions encouraged DDII to reaffirm its position as an exclusively *da'wa* movement. The change in the political map of the Middle East brought about by the success of the Iranian Revolution had a profound impact on the *da'wa* activities of DDII. As the primary agent of the campaign against Shi'ites in Indonesia,⁴⁶ the organization received more money from Saudi Arabia through such channels as Hai'at al-Ighatha al-Islamiyya al-'Alamiyya (International Islamic Relief

⁴³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁴⁴ June Chandra Santosa, "Modernization, Utopia, and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 1996), pp. 434-50. See also Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *South East Asian Research* 10,2 (2002): 117-54.

⁴⁵ On the dynamics behind the acceptance of Muslims on the Pancasila, see Faisal Ismail, "Islam, Politics, and Ideology in Indonesia: A Study of the Process of Muslim Acceptance of the Pancasila" (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1995).

⁴⁶ Bruinessen, "Global and Local in Indonesian Islam," p. 172.

Organization, IIRO), al-Majlis al-`Alami li'l-Masajid (World Council of Mosques, WCM), al-Nadwa al-`Alamiyya li al-Shabab al-Islami (World Assembly of Muslim Youth, WAMY) and Lajnat Birr al-Islami (Committee of Islamic Charity, CIC). This considerable financial support significantly increased DDII activity in the *da'wa* and social fields, underwriting the construction of new mosques, orphanages, and hospitals, the founding of Islamic schools, the distribution of free copies of the Qur'an and books, and preacher training. Within the framework of the Muslim preacher-training project, it entered into cooperation with the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (the Council of Indonesian `Ulama, MUI)—a semi-governmental body that was, in fact, created by the New Order to domesticate the *`ulama*⁴⁷—by launching a program of *da'i transmigrasi*, which sent Muslim preachers to remote transmigration areas.⁴⁸

In order to sustain its voice in the public sphere, DDII explored international Islamic issues through its mouthpiece, the monthly *Media Dakwah*.⁴⁹ One of the most abrasive issues concerned anti-Zionism. Anti-Zionists perceive a covert conspiracy by Jews who purportedly seek to dominate and rule the world through capitalism, communism, democratization, authoritarianism, revolution, and economic liberalization; they identify Jews as the source of all problems afflicting the Muslim *umma*.⁵⁰ DDII played a role in sponsoring the translation and spreading of a number of Arabic texts that are frequently referred to as *Al-Maqa'id al-Yahudiyya* (the Protocols of the Elders of Zion) and that provide the putative grounds for pursuing this issue. First published in 1903 as an abridged series in a Saint Petersburg daily newspaper, *The Banner*, the texts have, according to some scholars, their actual origin in an 1864 pamphlet by the French satirist Maurice Joly, which attacks the political ambitions of Napoleon III.⁵¹

Its control over resources led DDII to assume a central position among Islamic organizations in Indonesia. In negotiations for financial support, it served as a bridge between Saudi Arabia and a number of Muslim organizations, particularly those from the modernist end of the spectrum, such as the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and

⁴⁷ There are several studies on MUI. See, for instance, M. Atho Mudzhar, "The `Ulama, the Government, and Society in Modern Indonesia: The Indonesian Council of `Ulama Revisited," in *Islam in the Era of Globalization: Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity*, ed. Johan H. Meuleman (Jakarta: INIS, 2001), pp. 315-26; Nadirsyah Hosen, "Behind the Scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975-1998)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15,2 (2004): 147-79; and Moch. Nur Ichwan, "`Ulama, State, and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia After Suharto," *Islamic Law and Society* 15,1 (January 2005): 45-72.

⁴⁸ Hakiem and Linrung, *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah*, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁹ Concerning this periodical, see R. William Liddle, "Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia," in *Toward A New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, ed. Mark R. Woodward (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, 1996), pp. 323-56.

⁵⁰ For a further account on anti-Zionist sentiments in Indonesia, see Martin van Bruinessen, "Yahudi sebagai Simbol dan Wacana Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Kini," in *Spiritualitas Baru: Agama dan Aspirasi Rakyat*, ed. Ahmad Suaedy et al. (Yogyakarta: DIAN/Interfidei, 1994), pp. 253-68. See also James T. Siegel, "Kiblat and the Mediatic Jew," *Indonesia* 69 (April 2000): 9-40.

⁵¹ See, for instance, Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967); and Benjamin W. Segel, *A Lie and A Libel: The History of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

Persis. Indeed, to receive financial support from a generous donor within Saudi Arabia, an *ad hoc* association needed a recommendation (*tazkiya*) from the local office of the Rabitat al-`Alam al-Islami.⁵² Saudi Arabian support seemed significant in facilitating the *da`wa* activities of these organizations, which were compelled by this situation to reaffirm their positions as exclusively *da`wa* organizations. In spite of its very different doctrine, the same has held true for the Nahdlatul Ulama. Middle Eastern financial aid especially flooded well-known *pesantrens* attached to this, Indonesia's largest traditionalist Muslim organization.⁵³ In addition, DDII came to act as an important conduit in the distribution of grants provided by Saudi Arabia for Indonesian youths wanting to study Islam in Middle Eastern universities. Since 1975, DDII has received twenty-five grants every year to be distributed among Muslim organizations.⁵⁴

ISLAMIC ACTIVISM ON THE CAMPUS

The intensification of Islamic revitalization launched by DDII was felt most significantly on university campuses, which witnessed a rapid expansion of Islamic activism. On the basis of strategic considerations, DDII designated university campuses as one of the most important *da`wa* targets. Muhammad Natsir has personally supported Imaduddin Abdurrachim, an activist of the Salman Mosque of the Institut Teknologi Bandung (Institute of Technology of Bandung, ITB), who has been appointed the general secretary of the Kuwait-based International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO), to develop the program of the *Latihan Mujahid Dakwah* (Training of *Da`wa* Strivers).⁵⁵ This program was aimed to train new cadres among university students prepared to undertake *da`wa* activities, and its proliferation has provided a model for Islamic activism on college campuses and facilitated the popularity of a variety of programs for the study of Islam organized by religious activity units, such as *Mentoring Islam* (Islamic Courses) and *Studi Islam Terpadu* (Integrated Study of Islam).

To accelerate the spread of its influence, DDII sponsored projects for building mosques and Islamic centers in areas around twelve different universities all over Indonesia, including the University of Indonesia, in Jakarta; Andalas University, in Padang; Gadjah Mada University, in Yogyakarta; the State University Sebelas Maret, in Solo; and Diponegoro University, in Semarang. Known as "Bina Masjid Kampus," these projects provided the DDII cadres, who were usually graduates of Middle Eastern universities, the opportunity to offer Islamic training programs to university

⁵² Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, p. 73.

⁵³ Interview with K. H. Irfan Zidni, Jakarta, July 2003.

⁵⁴ Interview with Misbach Malim, the head of secretariat bureau of DDII, February 2003.

⁵⁵ On the role played by Imaduddin Abdurrachim in the proliferation of *halqas* and his closeness with Natsir, see Asna Husin, "Philosophical and Sociological Aspects of *Da`wah*: A Study of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1988), p. 168. Concerning this training, see "Gerakan Kaum Muda Islam Mesjid Salman," in *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer di Indonesia*, ed. Abdul Aziz, Imam Tholkhah, Soetarnan (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1989), pp. 207-50.

students more systematically and introduced them to the thinking of the main Islamist ideologues.⁵⁶

The implementation of a restrictive New Order policy in 1978, known as the Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kampus (Normalization of Campus Policy-Campus Coordination Board, NKK-BKK), which prohibited university students from playing an active part in politics and which was later strengthened by the enforcement of the *asas tunggal*, ultimately contributed to the acceleration of the spread of Islamic *da'wa* activities (which was nominally apolitical) on the campus. As one of the remarkable consequences of this policy, student movements came to a standstill in organizing activities and voicing their political demands. Many of their proposed conferences and training programs were refused permits by local police and military authorities. Membership fell, indicating that these politically engaged activities were no longer attractive to most students either because of strict censorship by the university authorities or self-censorship.⁵⁷

The policy embittered all university student organizations. The Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Student Association, HMI), the largest and oldest Muslim-university student organization, was no exception. Although this organization supported New Order developmentalism, for which Nurcholish Madjid, its most prominent leader in the 1970s, introduced the idea of secularization,⁵⁸ many of its members grew highly frustrated by the state's repression of campus activism. Their frustration increased when they saw how HMI's Malaysian counterpart, the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia, ABIM), was enjoying popular support in its advocacy of Islam as a comprehensive way of life.⁵⁹ Eventually, as a result of these pressures, the organization fragmented, generating a new HMI called the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (Muslim Student Association-the Assembly of the Savior of the Organization, HMI-MPO).⁶⁰ This organization took the same position as several other Muslim student organizations, such as the Masyumi-affiliated Pelajar Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Students, PII), which fiercely rejected the Pancasila.⁶¹

Suharto's depoliticization of university campuses stimulated growing numbers of students to turn toward Islamic *da'wa* activities. This trend reached its pinnacle following the Iranian Revolution and the Saudi reaction to it. As a result, university

⁵⁶ A complete list of the mosques and Islamic centers built by DDII in and around university campuses is available in Hakiem and Linrung, *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah*, p. 31; see also Husin, "Philosophical and Sociological Aspects of Da'wah," pp. 171-72.

⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Fauzie Ridjal and M. Rusli Karim, eds., *Dinamika Budaya dan Politik dalam Pembangunan* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1991).

⁵⁸ On Nurcholish Madjid's concept of secularization, see M. Kamal Hassan, "Contemporary Muslim Religio-Political Thought in Indonesia: The Response to 'New Order Modernization'" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1975), pp. 137-77.

⁵⁹ For a comparative study about these two movements, see M. Kamal Hassan, "The Response of Muslim Youth Organizations to Political Change: HMI in Indonesia and ABIM in Malaysia," in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, ed. R. William Roff (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 180-96.

⁶⁰ Concerning the rise of this new HMI, see M. Rusli Karim, *HMI MPO: Dalam Kemelut Modernisasi Politik di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), pp. 127-35.

⁶¹ On PII see Muhammad Wildan, "Students and Politics: The Response of the Pelajar Islam Indonesia (PII) to Politics in Indonesia" (MA thesis, Leiden University, 1999).

campuses witnessed an Islamic resurgence marked by an increase in students' observation of their Islamic obligations, in their wearing of the *jilbab*, and in the spread of Islamist books. Alongside the translations of the books by the Islamist theoreticians, those by Shi'ite ideologues, including Khomeini, Murtada Mutahhari, and Ali Shariati, were circulated widely among university students. The rise of Islamic publishing houses, such as Gema Insani Press, Pustaka Mantiq, Hasanah Ilmu, Al-Kautsar, Risalah Gusti, Pustaka al-Ummah, Asasuddin Press, and Tandhim Press, which were concerned with the publication and distribution of such books, helped disseminate these ideas. This situation undoubtedly provided a precondition for the growing influence of transnational Islamic movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, the Hizb al-Tahrir (the Party of Liberation), and the Tablighi Jama'at (Da'wa Society), in Indonesia.

The Muslim Brotherhood was initially founded under the name *Harakah Tarbiyah*, meaning "the movement for education," and developed under the guidance of prominent figures, some of whom graduated from al-Azhar and other Middle Eastern universities. Among them were Abu Ridho, or Abdi Sumaiti, and Rahmat Abdullah.⁶² The movement grew by recruiting through a system of secret cells. Under this system, *halqas* and *dauras* were organized in members' houses and other closed venues, called *usrah*. Every cell consisted of between ten to twenty members under the leadership of a *murabbi*, literally meaning "instructor."⁶³ Because of the secret nature of the meetings, all cell members were encouraged to advertise the thoughts propagated by the movement's ideologues—through such books as *Ma'alim fi'l Tariq* (Signposts on the Road), by Sayyid Qutb—to potential followers by word of mouth. Those interested were invited to attend the *halqas* and *dauras*. Once they decided to become members, they too were encouraged to approach potential followers and invite them to attend their activities. In a relatively short time, the movement was present in nearly all Indonesian universities and emerged as the strongest force fueling Islamic activism on the campus. In retrospect, it is clear that this secret organization's widespread influence provided the foundation for the Partai Keadilan (Justice Party), which was formed soon after the collapse of the New Order regime and later transformed into the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperity and Justice Party), which won a significant number of votes in the 2004 general elections.⁶⁴

The Hizb al-Tahrir, established by Taqiyy al-Din al-Nabhani in Palestine in 1953 and introduced to Indonesia by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Baghdadi, an activist from Australia, followed the initiative of the Muslim Brotherhood in seeking to exert its

⁶² See Abdul Aziz, "Meraih Kesempatan Dalam Situasi Mengambang: Studi Kasus Kelompok Keagamaan Mahasiswa Universitas Indonesia," *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat* 20,7 (1995): 7-10. On the role of Rahmat Abdullah and Abu Ridho in this movement, see "Ikhwaniul Muslimin: Inspirasi Gerakan Tarbiyah," *Suara Hidayatullah*, August 2001.

⁶³ Aziz, "Meraih Kesempatan Dalam Situasi Mengambang," pp. 7-8. See also Ali Said Damanik, *Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), pp. 88-93.

⁶⁴ On this party, see Mathias Diederich, "A Closer Look at *Dakwah* and Politics in Indonesia: The Partai Keadilan: Some Insights into its History and an Analysis of its Programs and Statutes," *Archipel* 64 (2002): 101-15; Damanik, *Fenomena Partai Keadilan*; and Elizabeth Fuller Collins, "Islam is the Solution: *Dakwah* and Democracy in Indonesia," *Kultur, The Indonesian Journal for Muslim Cultures* 3,1 (2003): 143-82.

influence on university campuses.⁶⁵ Also like the Muslim Brotherhood, it used secret cells. But in terms of ideology, it was more radical than the Muslim Brotherhood, as it vigorously espoused the creation of the *khilafa islamiyya*, "Islamic Caliphate." To achieve this aim, it did not hesitate to use violent means. Al-Baghdadi started his efforts to propagate this movement when he was invited by Abdullah Nuh to his Pesantren Al-Ghazali, in Bogor, West Java. From this town he began promoting the Hizb al-Tahrir by organizing *halqas* in the al-Ghifari mosque, which was located in Bogor's largest university, the Institut Pertanian Bogor (Institute for Agriculture of Bogor, IPB), and in a private university located in the same city, Universitas Ibnu Khaldun (Ibnu Khaldun University). The movement soon attracted a significant number of activists into the Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (University Da'wa Organization) of both universities. Through the network established by this organization, it spread to other universities, including Padjadjaran University, in Bandung; Gadjah Mada University, in Yogyakarta; Airlangga University, in Surabaya; Brawijaya University, in Malang; and Hasanuddin University, in Makassar.⁶⁶ Later, it openly proclaimed its existence in the post-New Order Indonesian public sphere by calling itself the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. Under this name, it remained consistent in viewing the existing political system as illegitimate and thus refused to participate in the general elections.

The Tablighi Jama'at, originally an Indian Islamic movement, joined the competition to attract followers at Indonesia's universities. Established in the 1930s by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandahlawi, this movement maintained a loose organizational structure and functioned as a community based on personal relationships.⁶⁷ It had established itself in Indonesia by the 1970s, but only in the 1980s did it venture onto university campuses. Centered in an old mosque in Kebon Jeruk, Jakarta, its network expanded to various cities outside Jakarta; its presence is now visible in almost all the aforementioned universities. Its followers have been active in conducting *khuruj*, traveling around to advocate *da'wa* causes. Interestingly perhaps, in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Hizb al-Tahrir, it is not interested in politics, or at least not in any direct effort to seize political power. Instead, it concentrates on individual reform and renewal by preaching door-to-door and urging Muslims to perform their religious duties and rituals properly.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ For an introduction to this movement, see D. Commins, "Taqiy al-Din al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," *The Muslim World Journal* 81 (1991): 194-211; S. Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996).

⁶⁶ On the spread of this movement, see Rusydi Zakaria, "Studi Awal tentang Kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Kampus Universitas Pajajaran," *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat* 20,7 (1995): 17-18.

⁶⁷ Concerning this movement and its transnational network, see a number of articles compiled in Muhammad Khalid Masud, ed., *Travelers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2000). See also Yoginder Singh Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000): A Cross-Country Comparative Study* (London: Orient Longman, 2002).

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the growth of this movement among university students, see Marzani Anwar, "Gerakan Jama'ah Tabligh dalam Kehidupan Mahasiswa Yogyakarta," *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat* 20,7 (1995): 29-39. See also other articles in the same volume, such as Haidhor Ali Ahmad, "Kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Dalam dan Sekitar Kampus ITS," pp. 44-46, and Huda Ali, "Kehidupan Beragama dan kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Kampus Unibraw, Malang," pp. 62-64.

These transnational movements had to compete with small underground quietist *usrah* groups known collectively as the NII (Negara Islam Indonesia) movement, as we have noted earlier. Overall, the aims of the NII movement echoed the aspirations of the *Darul Islam* movement. Specifically, these groups sought to create an Islamic state with a preeminently revolutionary and uncompromising political stance by first establishing an Islamic community, or *jama'ah islamiyah*. The activities of this movement generally followed a pattern similar to those of the other movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, but the NII's cells were organized more secretly and followed the direction of particular *amirs*, "commanders." As in the other movements, members referred to their activities in the secret cells as "*Tarbiyah Islamiyah*" (Islamic upbringing).⁶⁹

Initially, the NII movement developed among a small group of students in Yogyakarta. Irfan S. Awwas, the leader of the Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Masjid (Coordinating Board of Mosque Youth, BKPM), played an important role in accelerating its proliferation. He disseminated the movement's ideas by publishing the semi-clandestine magazine *Arrisalah*.⁷⁰ One of the most important sites in the NII movement's network was the Pesantren Ngruki established by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. Despite the fact that both were relative newcomers with certain ties to DDII, they emerged as the movement's key ideologues through the publication of manuals teaching the inculcation of a spirit to overthrow the secular government and replace it with an Islamic state. As the manuals demonstrated, these two leaders were strongly influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's ideologues. Because of their influential leadership in the movement, both were pursued by the police and consequently forced to flee to Malaysia in 1985. Even without them, *usrah* groups continued to attract adherents and established footholds in Javanese cities, including Karanganyar, Boyolali, Klaten, Yogyakarta, Temanggung, Brebes, Cirebon, Bandung, and Jakarta.⁷¹

LEMBAGA ILMU PENGETAHUAN ISLAM DAN BAHASA ARAB (LIPIA)

Conditions created by DDII provided a foundation on which Saudi Arabia could further develop its influence and foster Wahhabism. Alarmed by the widespread impact of the Iranian Revolution, the Kingdom set up the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic, LIPIA) in Jakarta in 1980. It was initially established by Saudi Decree No. 5/N/26710 as the Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (Institute of Arabic Teaching, LPBA). Its first location was at Jl. Raden Saleh, Central Jakarta, before it moved to Jl. Salemba Raya, also in Central Jakarta, in 1986. Its current address is at Jl. Buncit Raya, South Jakarta.⁷²

⁶⁹ One of the main references for the NII members in their secret cells is Imaduddin al-Mustaqim, *Risalah Tarbiyah Islamiyah: Menuju Generasi yang Diridhoi Allah* (np: np, nd).

⁷⁰ For a more detailed account on the NII movement, see Santosa, "Modernization, Utopia, and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism," pp. 451-54. See also Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism," and Sidney Jones, "Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia," *Asia Report* 42 (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2002).

⁷¹ Santosa, "Modernization, Utopia, and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism," pp. 451-54.

⁷² Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab, *Prospektus Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab As-Su'udi di Indonesia* (Jakarta: LPBA, 1985), p. 8.

To pave the way for the establishment of LIPIA, the then-Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Indonesia, Bakr `Abbas Khamis, played an enormously important role in initiating diplomatic steps with the Indonesian government. The institute was the first foreign educational institution in Indonesia and began its operations on May 12, 1981. In the first three years, it was concerned with teaching the Arabic language to candidates recruited by DDII to study in Saudi Arabia. They were generally talented preachers who had completed their task of conducting *da'wa* activities in remote areas within the framework of the *da'i transmigrasi*, which dispatched Muslim preachers to transmigration areas.⁷³ LIPIA offered regular programs of Arabic courses, including a one-year, non-intensive course and a two-year pre-university course.

Subsequently broadening its programs, LIPIA recruited talented students from numerous famous modernist and traditionalist *pesantrens*, such as the Pesantren Gontor Ponorogo, the Pesantren Manbaul Ulum Jombang, the Pesantren Al-Amien Madura, and the Pesantren Darut Dakwah wal Irsyad, South Sulawesi.⁷⁴ It provided full scholarships to students attending the pre-university intensive Arabic course. In addition to tuition, they received an allowance and books and were provided with accommodations. LIPIA eventually opened undergraduate programs in Islamic law and first offered a bachelor's degree in 1986. In this program, students are required to study a variety of Islamic subjects, including Qur'anic Exegesis, Islamic Theology, Traditions, Islamic Jurisprudences, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Maxims of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic History, and Arabic. Several classical textbooks on Islamic doctrine are used, including *Fath al-Qadir* (the Omnipotent's Opening), *Subul al-Salam* (Paths of the Peacefulness), and *Bidayat al-Mujtahid* (The Distinguished Jurist's Primer), in addition to modern ones, such as *Al-Qaul al-Mufid `ala Kitab al-Tawhid* (the Useful Opinion on the Book of the Oneness of God), *Al-Wajiz fi 'Idah al-Qawa'id* (Summary of the Explanations of the Principles), and *Mudhakkarat al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyya* (Treatise on the Islamic Civilization).⁷⁵ Since the opening of this program, the acronym LIPIA has officially replaced LPBA as the name for this organization.

LIPIA is directly associated with the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud Islamic University of Riyadh and directed by a Saudi Arabian responsible for academic and administrative affairs under the direct supervision of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Jakarta.⁷⁶ The first director was `Abd al-`Aziz `Abd Allah al-`Amr, a student of Bin Baz. As the institution administratively responsible for LIPIA, the university selects and recruits lecturers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Somalia, and Indonesia. They work with the university on a contract basis. A few additional teaching staff members were personally recruited by the director in charge, including, for example, al-Baghdadi, the main propagator of the Hizb al-Tahrir, who was recruited by al-`Amr.⁷⁷

⁷³ Interview with Misbach Malim, Jakarta, February 2003.

⁷⁴ Interview with Muhammad Zaini, LIPIA staff member in the student administration office, Jakarta, March 2003. This information is based on the profile of the institute.

⁷⁵ Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, *Bayan bi al-Kutub wa al-Mudhakkarat al-Muqarrarat li Qism al-Shari'a* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 2003).

⁷⁶ Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab di Indonesia Pada Tahun Kelima Belas Hijriah* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 1995), pp. 3-5.

⁷⁷ Interview with Muhammad Yusuf Harun, member of the teaching staff of the LIPIA, Jakarta, March 2003.

Because of the important position of LIPIA in the eyes of Saudi Arabia, a number of high Saudi Arabian functionaries have visited this institute: Prince Sultan ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, Prince Sa`ud al-Faysal, Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, Prince Turki al-Faysal, Khalid bin Muhammad al-Anqari, `Abd Allah ibn `Abd al-Muhsin al-Turki, Usama Faysal, `Abd Allah al-Hijji, `Abd Allah ibn Salih al-`Ubayd, and Ibrahim al-Akhdar.⁷⁸ Thanks to Saudi Arabia's considerable support, LIPIA extended its influence throughout Indonesia in a relatively short time. It printed books on Wahhabite doctrines and editions of the al-Qur'an, which were distributed free of charge to hundreds of Islamic educational institutions and religious organizations. Among the books are *Al-`Ubudiyya* (the Servanthood), *Al-`Aqida al-Wasitiyya* (the Middle Faith) by Ibn Taymiyya, *`Aqidat Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a* (the Faith of the Followers of the Prophetic Tradition and the Community of the Prophet) by Muhammad ibn Salih al-`Uthaymin, *Butlan `Aqa'id al-Shi'a* (Falsity of the Faith of the Shi'ites) by `Abd al-Sattar al-Tunsawi, *Al-Khuttut al-Arida li al-Shi'a al-Ithna `Ashiriyya* (the Petitions against the Twelve Shi'ites) by Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, and *Kitab al-Tawhid* (the Book on the Oneness of God) by Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab.⁷⁹ It has also nurtured *da'wa* activities by organizing the *Musabaqat Tilawat al-Qur'an* (the Contest of Reciting the Qur'an), opening *halqas* and *dauras*, and running *da'wa* training in cooperation with various Islamic organizations.

Although the exact extent of its influence cannot be assessed, many aspects of Wahhabite doctrine have been espoused by LIPIA's students. Their acquaintance with Wahhabite doctrine was facilitated effectively by various *halqas* and *dauras* in which LIPIA teaching staff had the opportunity to give lectures.⁸⁰ But it should be noted that the thoughts of the main Islamist ideologues, such as Banna, Qutb, and Mawdudi, also found fertile soil in the institute. In retrospect, it is no surprise that the institute produced many of the activists who joined and energized the Partai Keadilan (Sejahtera).

In an effort to intensify its campaign for Wahhabism, LIPIA introduced the program of sending talented students to study in Saudi Arabia, particularly at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa`ud Islamic University and the Medina Islamic University. Through this program, more than thirty of its graduates were able to continue their studies in Saudi Arabia every year. This opportunity became a major attraction of LIPIA's program. For many Indonesian Muslims, studying Islam in the Middle East remains a great source of pride. For centuries, Mecca and Medina had been the favored destination of Indonesian students wanting to seek religious knowledge in that part of the world. They studied in *halqas* and *dauras* conducted by well-known

⁷⁸ *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, Warta Tahunan: Tahun Akademik 1418-1419 H* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 1999), p. 25.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁰ According to Salim Segaf al-Jufri, teaching staff member of LIPIA, students were not steered to believe in Wahhabite doctrines. Those who had the Nahdhatul Ulama background, for instance, did not generally change their religious beliefs; they retained their NU-ness. The then-director of the LIPIA prohibited lecturers from questioning students to expose differences in their religious beliefs. Interview with Salim Segaf al-Jufri, March 2003. This information is confirmed by Badruddin Busra, a LIPIA graduate. Interview with Badruddin Busra, Jakarta, March 2003.

religious scholars in the Grand Mosque of Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque of Medina.⁸¹

Consonant with the growth of the Salafism of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, however, the central position of Mecca and Medina as favorite places to study was gradually replaced by al-Azhar University in Cairo. This institution took over the task of producing religious scholars who played an active role in the dissemination of modernist notions in Indonesia. Cairo's position as the center of religious authority remained intact for decades,⁸² but it began to lose its attraction in the 1980s, ceding its position to the growing popularity of Saudi Arabian universities. This occurred in line with the process of rapprochement between al-Azhar University and Saudi Arabia, marked by the former's willingness to accept Saudi's assistance in organizing international activities through the Islamic World Council for Propagation and Aid.⁸³ The presence of LIPIA in Indonesia undoubtedly boosted Saudi Arabian efforts to confirm its central position in a manner that would impress Indonesian Muslims; this is confirmed by the fact that the number of Indonesians studying in Saudi Arabian universities grew significantly from year to year.

To help justify its claim of being the "protector of the Muslim *umma*," Saudi Arabia has always supported calls for jihad throughout the Muslim world. The first such instance occurred when the Afghan War broke out in the 1980s. At that time, Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Arab Islamist organizations, mobilized jihad volunteers from Arab and other Muslim countries.⁸⁴ Thousands of volunteers were thereby able to take part in jihad. These volunteer forces were consolidated in the offices of the Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood in Peshawar, Pakistan, which had become a center for recruitment, training, and coordination of volunteers, and later developed into the Maktab al-Khidmat li'l-Mujahidin al-'Arab (Service Bureau of Arab *Mujahidin*) run by 'Abd Allah 'Azzam and the now infamous Bin Laden.⁸⁵ Almost all Afghan *mujahidin* factions, including the Hizb-i Islami, the Jami'at-i Islami, and the Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith, led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, and Jamil al-Rahman, respectively, enjoyed the support of the volunteers.⁸⁶

⁸¹ See Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004). For the dynamics shaping the lives of Indonesian students in Mecca in the nineteenth century, see C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century: Daily Life, Customs, and Learning of the Moslems of the East-India-Archipelago* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

⁸² On al-Azhar as the center of religious learning for Indonesians, see Mona Abaza, *Indonesian Students in Cairo: Islamic Education, Perceptions, and Exchanges* (Paris: Association Archipel, 1994).

⁸³ Rainer Brunner, *Islamic Ecumenism in the Twentieth Century: The Azhar and Shiism between Rapprochement and Restraint* (London: Brill, 2004), p. 387. Cf. Jakob Stovgaard-Petersen, *Defining Islam for the Egyptian State: Muftis and Fatwas of the Dar al-Ifta* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁸⁴ See Barnett R. Rubin, "Arab Islamists in Afghanistan," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?*, ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1997), p. 185.

⁸⁵ Concerning the history of this organization, see Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), p. 18.

⁸⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), p. 132.

The appeal for volunteers to wage jihad in Afghanistan emerged as the first serious challenge to foreign students studying in Saudi Arabia and supported by grants from the Kingdom. They were required to prove their commitment to Islam. After finishing their studies, many such students, among them Indonesians, decided to take part in the Afghan War. Participating in the jihad there turned out to be a sort of fieldwork for them. In the Afghan battlefields they stood shoulder to shoulder with volunteer fighters from various radical organizations in the Muslim world who found in the Afghan war an action through which they could channel their radical spirit to defend Islam.⁸⁷

A NEW TYPE OF MIDDLE EASTERN GRADUATE

The return of the LIPIA graduates who had completed their studies in Saudi Arabia and had undergone their baptism of fire in the Afghan War marked the birth of a new Wahhabi generation in Indonesia. Among them we note some famous names, such as Chamsaha Sofwan (or Abu Nida), Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, and Aunur Rafiq Ghuftron. They were DDII cadres who upon their return taught in *pesantrens* attached to the organization, including the Pesantren al-Mukmin in Ngruki, Pesantren Wathaniyah Islamiyah in Kebumen, and Pesantren al-Furqan in Gresik. In contrast to traditional *pesantrens* that belong to the Nahdlatul Ulama, these schools are comparatively modern in character, as they adopt the classical system and modern subjects. But ideologically they are close to Wahhabism, and their curriculum primarily emphasizes the teaching of Arabic, Islamic theology, and jurisprudence. To some extent, they resemble the *pesantrens* developed by modernist Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Persis.

Given the background of these graduates, it is probably inappropriate to characterize them as "*lumpenintellegentia*," a term introduced by Oliver Roy in imitation of Karl Marx to describe a new generation of militants who are poorly educated and have no capacity to articulate a concept of Islam as a political project.⁸⁸ In fact, these graduates are well educated and enjoy a certain status as preachers capable of proper discourse. DDII prides itself on molding religious authorities capable of speaking Arabic and reading classical and modern Arabic texts, while—in contrast to traditional *ʿulama*—adopting puritanical views. As DDII cadres, they are well acquainted with the Islamist discourses of modern political Islamic movements.

Nevertheless, these graduates who returned to Indonesia in the 1980s can be distinguished from their predecessors—older DDII cadres who likewise had the opportunity to complete their studies in Saudi Arabia or other Middle Eastern countries—in terms of their commitment to spread Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *daʿwa* movement. They have claimed that Indonesian Muslims desperately need an understanding of "true" Islam as practiced by the *Salaf al-Salih*. In the name of Islamic Reformism, they have criticized the established modernist Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad, and Persis, which they perceive as having lost their reformist spirit by inclining instead toward rationalization. Instead of persistently struggling for the implementation of the principles of *tawhid*, they have asserted that these more established, modernist organizations have grown preoccupied with their own interests, like participating in

⁸⁷ Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, pp. 138-41.

⁸⁸ See Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, pp. 84-85.

politics and managing schools, orphanages, and hospitals, at the expense of a serious commitment to deal with the main problems of the *umma*.

The environment in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the takeover of the Grand Mosque by Juhayman-led group undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the birth of the new Wahhabi generation. Saudi Arabia's policy of advertising its commitment to Islam while suppressing radical expressions of political Islam seemingly became a catalyst for widespread manifestations of a Wahhabi resurgence, particularly among youth and university students and staff in that country. This group enthusiastically demonstrated a commitment to religious propagation and a puritanical life-style, while refraining from openly criticizing the Saudi government.⁸⁹ Witnessing this development directly, Indonesian DDII cadres who studied in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s seemingly became obsessed with organizing a more systematic propagation of Wahhabism. Upon their return, they were not just ready to apply their knowledge of Wahhabism, but also to mobilize people to join their organization.

It was Abu Nida who took the initiative to develop the Salafi *da'wa* movement. He was born in Lamongan, East Java, in 1954. Having finished his secondary schooling at the Pendidikan Guru Agama Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Islamic Teacher Training School) in Karangasem, he showed interest in participating in a DDII *da'wa* training course held in Pesantren Darul Falah in Bogor, as part of the program designed to send Muslim preachers to transmigration regions. He was then sent to the hinterland of West Kalimantan. After Abu Nida had finished his work in Kalimantan, Muhammad Natsir recommended him for study in Saudi Arabia. He studied Arabic at LIPIA before attending the Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud University, under the sponsorship of the Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami. While studying Islamic Law in Saudi Arabia, he worked as a staff member at the DDII branch office in Riyadh and made contacts with funding sources. Before returning home, he fought in the Afghan War, joining the Jama'at al-Da'wa faction led by Jamil al-Rahman.⁹⁰

In 1986, the fervor to conduct the *da'wa* activities had led Abu Nida to Yogyakarta after he had taught in the Pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, for less than one year. Yogyakarta has a unique character. Although it is associated with a syncretistic Javanese *abangan* culture, symbolized by the existence of the Yogyakarta Court, it was the birthplace of the Muhammadiyah. From this city, Indonesia's largest reformist-modernist organization spread and took root all over Indonesia. In addition, the city has long been known as the main destination of students wanting to study at a university. At the beginning of every academic year, thousands of students from almost all the provinces pour into the city. Because of the influx of students from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, Yogyakarta has developed as a sort of cultural capital. Here, Abu Nida began to propagate Salafi *da'wa* activities, targeting university areas with the goal of attracting students.

Supported by Saefullah Mahyuddin, the then-head of the DDII branch office in Yogyakarta known for his closeness to the Jama'ah Shalahuddin (Shalahuddin Community), a religious activity unit attached to the Gadjah Mada University, Abu Nida lectured at Islamic study forums organized by the community and promoted

⁸⁹ R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 139-40.

⁹⁰ Interview with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, December 2002. This information was confirmed by my interview with Tri Madiono, one of the early followers of Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

Wahhabite doctrines among students. He also participated in the *halqas* and *dauras* held by activists of the *Tarbiyah* Movement, whose members were known to be close to the Muslim Brotherhood or engaged in NII activism. Working in conjunction with Abu Ridho, for instance, he organized *halqas* and *dauras* around the Gadjah Mada University and created the slogan "Aqidah Salafi, Manhaj Ikhwani," meaning "Salafi belief, Brethren practice," popular among activists at the end of the 1980s.⁹¹ Abu Nida extended his reach to Solo, forging cooperation with NII activists, such as Muhammad Basiron, for example, and attracted participants not only among students but also among the common people who had previously become acquainted with the activities of NII or the Shi'ite-inclined NII branch led by M. Muzakir. The latter was an NII splinter group known as Kelompok Gumuk (Gumuk Group), named after the village where it was based.⁹²

As interest in the Wahhabite doctrines spread, Abu Nida expanded his influence by independently organizing Salafi *halqas* and *dauras*.⁹³ Favorite sites were the Mardiyah Mosque, near the Medical Faculty of the Gadjah Mada University, the Mujahidin Mosque, near the Institut Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan (Teachers' Training State College) in Yogyakarta, the Siswa Graha Mosque, Pogung, the STM Kentungan Mosque, and a house at Jl. Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, known as B7. Through this strategy, Abu Nida recruited into his Salafi circles a significant number of university students, especially from the Gadjah Mada University, the Teachers' Training State College of Yogyakarta and the University of National Development (Universitas Pembangunan Nasional, UPN) of Yogyakarta.⁹⁴

With support from his two closest friends, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin and Aunur Rofik Ghuftron, Abu Nida organized a one-month *daura* in the Pesantren Ibn al-Qayyim, Sleman, Yogyakarta, not far from the Gadjah Mada University. This *pesantren* was established by DDII and led by Suprpto A. Jarimi, a Muhammadiyah preacher. The enthusiasm shown by university students wanting to attend this *daura* inspired Abu Nida to institutionalize it as the "Daurah Ibn al-Qayyim." Ghuftron followed in Abu Nida's footsteps by opening a similar *daura* in his own *pesantren*, al-Furqan, in Gresik, East Java, to focus on the learning of Arabic. Many students who had attended the Daurah Ibn al-Qayyim went to Gresik to master Arabic.⁹⁵

Since the early 1990s, the *da'wa* activities developed by Abu Nida have been buttressed by the arrival of Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, and Yusuf Usman Baisa, LIPIA graduates of Hadrami descent who had studied abroad. Thalib, as we have noted earlier, had studied at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute of Lahore, Pakistan, while Jawwas and Baisa had completed their studies at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University and the Islamic teaching center run by Muhammad bin Salih al-'Uthaymin in Najran, respectively. LIPIA assigned them the task of teaching at the Pesantren al-Irsyad, Tengeran, Salatiga. They also immersed

⁹¹ Interview with Abu Mash'ab, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁹² Interview with Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, December 2002.

⁹³ For preliminary surveys about this movement, see Ahzab Muttaqin, "Kaum Salafi di Yogyakarta: Melacak Sejarah Awal," *Research Report* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Penelitian IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1999). See also Sabarudin, "Jama'ah At-Turats al-Islami di Yogyakarta," *Research Report* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Penelitian IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2000).

⁹⁴ Interviews with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, December 2002, and with Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, December 2002.

⁹⁵ Interview with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

themselves in campus *da'wa* activities, particularly those at the Diponegoro University, the State University Sebelas Maret, the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, and the Gadjah Mada University. Seeing the high level of student enthusiasm, they decided to design their own program based in the *pesantren*. Called *I'tikaf Ramadan*, a term referring to the practice of remaining in mosques to read the Qur'an during the fasting month of Ramadan, it was a *daura* activity that focused on Arabic language acquisition in the heightened spiritual atmosphere of that month.⁹⁶

The efforts made by these new graduates to spread the Salafi *da'wa* proved fruitful. Salafi communities, whose membership consisted mainly of university students, proliferated. Initially, their presence was most significantly felt in Yogyakarta, Solo, and Semarang, where they formed an exclusive current in the surge of Indonesia's Islamic activist movements. As other Saudi Arabian graduates returned, the phenomenon quickly spread to Jakarta, Bandung, Cirebon, Semarang, Purwokerto, and Makassar. In Jakarta, a number of Salafi communities emerged and organized *halqas* and *dauras* in the area around Jatinegara, Duren Sawit, and Salemba, where Dahlan Basri, Abdul Hakim Abdat, and Ahmad Farid Oqbah gave lectures.⁹⁷ Likewise, in Makassar, Masrur Zainuddin disseminated the Salafi *da'wa* messages by presenting lectures in *halqas* and *dauras* organized by students in Hasanuddin University, the Teachers' Training State College of Makassar, and the Indonesian Muslim University (Universitas Muslimin Indonesia, UMI).⁹⁸

THE SALAFI FOUNDATIONS

The multiplication of the Salafi communities led seamlessly to the emergence of foundations that received considerable financial support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries. Abu Nida set up the As-Sunnah Foundation in 1992 and involved Thalib, Jawwas, and Asifuddin in that enterprise. Together, they built a mosque at Degolan, in Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, as a center of activities. Thalib managed the mosque named after the leader of the Jama'at al-Da'wa *mujahidin* faction, Jamil al-Rahman. Students from universities in Central Java and other provinces attended *halqas* and *dauras* held in this *pesantren*. It quickly became the most important center of Salafi activity in Indonesia.

Through the As-Sunnah Foundation, *da'wa* activities and the founding of *halqas* and *dauras* were pursued to promote the Salafi movement. More and more university students joined in the *da'wa* activities. Aware of this development, Abu Nida and his closest companions published *As-Sunnah*, the first Salafi periodical to appear in Indonesia, in 1994. *As-Sunnah* addressed Wahhabite doctrines and fatwas promulgated by Saudi Arabian religious authorities concerning beards, television, radio, and the like. Ayip Syafruddin was managing editor. Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin and several other Salafi proponents were on the editorial staff, while Abu Nida, Jawwas, and Thalib served as its editorial board.⁹⁹ In every issue there was a debate on women and the restrictions they should accept in social interactions. It also

⁹⁶ Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, February 2003.

⁹⁷ Interview with Ahmad Farid Oqbah, Jakarta, February 2003.

⁹⁸ Interview with Zainuddin Abdullah, Makassar, May 2003.

⁹⁹ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Solo, December 2002; see also the colophon of the *As-Sunnah*, in *As-Sunnah* 12,1 (1995): 2.

addressed political issues, particularly the Iranian Revolution, whose excesses some articles criticized.¹⁰⁰

Their activities succeeded in attracting the interest of foundation executives in the Middle East. The Mu'assasat al-Haramayn al-Khayriyya (Haramayn Charitable Foundation), known as al-Haramayn, and the Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami (Reviving of Islamic Heritage Society) funded Abu Nida's ambitious program to build mosques.¹⁰¹ The former was a Saudi-based institution backed by the Saudi religious establishment operating under the supervision of the Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, *Da'wa*, and Guidance of Saudi Arabia. This foundation, which recently came under scrutiny by the United States government because it was suspected of having of ties to terrorism, was created in the mid-1980s with such aims as "establishing correct Islamic doctrines, educating new generations, confronting ideological and atheistic invasion, and calling non-Muslims to Islam." The Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami was a Kuwait-based institution set up in 1981. It operated under the supervision of the Kuwaiti government, and also received support from the Saudi religious establishment, evidenced in a letter sent by Bin Baz to its founder, Tariq Samiy Sultan al-'Aishiy.¹⁰² Heartened by these opportunities, in January 1994 Abu Nida created the Majlis Ihya' al-Turats al-Islami Foundation whose slogan speaks of calling Muslims to return to the true path of Islam (*tashhid al-'aqida*).

Under the auspices of the Majlis, Abu Nida opened a model village at Wirokerten, Bantul, in which he set up the Pesantren al-Turats al-Islami. His idea was to imitate the first model Islamic village established by Ashari Muhammad, the leader of the Darul Arqam, in Sungai Penchala, a remote area twenty kilometers from Kuala Lumpur.¹⁰³ In this modest village a mosque was built and named Jamil al-Rahman. Around it, Abu Nida and other teachers of the *pesantren* live in a cluster of five or six houses. All activities of the *pesantren* are concentrated in the mosque. Its students are never many—fifty at most. They are taught to read classical and modern Islamic texts, particularly those emanating from the Wahhabite sect, and to internalize the Salafi way of life.¹⁰⁴ Later Abu Nida established the Islamic Center Bin Baz, an umbrella organization encompassing the Bin Baz Kindergarten, the Bin Baz Primary School, and the Bin Baz Junior High School, located in Karang Gayam, Sitimulyo, Piyungan, Bantul, Yogyakarta.

Inspired by the success of Abu Nida, Muhammad Yusuf Harun—another Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University graduate appointed to the teaching staff of LIPIA—set up the al-Sofwah Foundation.¹⁰⁵ Support was provided by Muhammad

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Abu Nida, "Bahaya Revolusi Iran," *As-Sunnah* 16,2 (1996): 33-50.

¹⁰¹ These two foundations are mentioned by Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003) as the main sources of charity in the Muslim world. See Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 36 and 73.

¹⁰² See Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, *Manhaj al-Jam'iyyat li'l-Da'wa wa al-Tawjiyya* (Kuwait: Jam'iyya Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 1997), p. 23. See also www.alturath.org.

¹⁰³ Concerning this movement, see Ahmad Fauzi bin Abdul Hamid, "Islamic Resurgence in the Periphery: A Study of Political Islam in Contemporary Malaysia with Special Reference to the Darul Arqam Movement 1968-1996" (PhD dissertation, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1998). See also Noorhaidi Hasan, "In Search of Identity: the Contemporary Islamic Communities in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika-Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 7,3 (2000): 67-110.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Abu Isa, a teacher in the *pesantren*, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Buncit Raya, Jakarta, March 2003.

Khalaf, an affluent businessman from Saudi Arabia, through the al-Haramayn and Jam'iyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami.¹⁰⁶ This foundation claimed that its mission was to uphold God's message by cleansing the *umma's* faith of *bid'a* (unwholesome innovations), *khurafa* (superstitions), and *shirk* (polytheism) and calling on Muslims to return to al-Qur'an and Sunna, a message consonant with an understanding of the *Salaf al-Salih*.¹⁰⁷ Besides its main role as an agent channeling philanthropic aid from Middle Eastern foundations, it has been active in *da'wa* activities, such as *da'i* training programs, *da'wa* courses, and the publication and distribution of Islamic books. Its activities continued to develop under the leadership of Abu Bakar Muhammad al-Altway appointed as the chairman of the foundation at the end of the 1990s to the extent that the Al-Sofwah Foundation was able to produce and distribute *da'wa* cassettes called *Tasjilat al-Sofwa*, as well as translate and distribute more Islamic books. Pustaka Azzam, the publishing house of this foundation, emerged as the most important Salafi publishing house in Indonesia.¹⁰⁸ This foundation was even able to construct a fairly luxurious building for its operations in South Jakarta and a center for the training of Muslim preachers named Imam as-Syafi'i in Cilacap.

Shortly after the Al-Sofwah foundation was set up, Ahmad Zawawi established the Lajnat al-Khairiyyah al-Musharakah (Cooperative Committee for Islamic Charity). He was one of the DDII cadres given the task of coordinating a pilot project of *da'wa* among non-Muslims in the Mentawai islands, West Sumatra, in his capacity as the deputy-secretary of that region's DDII branch office. Thanks to the recommendation of Muhammad Natsir, he continued his studies at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University in 1982. Having completed his studies, he was sent to be an instructor at the Arabic Training Center of the Muhammadiyah by DDII and, at the same time, served as a staff member on its international cooperation board. The Lajnat al-Khairiyyah al-Musharakah maintained direct contact with the Jam'iyat Ihya' al-Turath. Indeed, it can be said to be an unofficial representative of the latter. When established, it had an office in the Central Office of the Muhammadiyah in Menteng Raya, Jakarta. As a consequence of tension with Muhammadiyah arising from competition over the right to channel Kuwaiti financial support for *da'wa* activities, one year later the Lajnah moved to Cempaka Putih, where it rented a house. Zawawi has even been able to strengthen his foundation by acting as the official representative of the Jam'iyat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami of Kuwait. Its Indonesian office is now located at Jatinegara, East Jakarta.¹⁰⁹

The Lajnat al-Khairiyyah al-Musharakah was set up to impose Kuwait's will on the incorporation and coordination of Muslim preachers, particularly graduates of Middle Eastern universities, and to channel social and philanthropic aid to orphans and impoverished people. Besides these main activities, it sponsored the building of numerous mosques and Islamic centers and promoted the translation and

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Suroso and Sandhi, staff members of the al-Sofwa Foundation, Jakarta, October 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Yayasan Al-Sofwa, "Kilas Yayasan Al-Sofwa," *Booklet* (Jakarta: Al-Sofwa, n.d.). See also www.alsowah.or.id.

¹⁰⁸ There are a dozen other minor Salafi publishing houses in Indonesia, including Pustaka al Sofwah, Pustaka al-Haura, Maktabah Salafy Press, Penerbit an-Najiyah, Pustaka Imam Buchori, Darul Hadith, Pustaka Imam Syafei, Darul Falah, Pustaka Arafah, Pustaka At-Tibyan, Pustaka al-Atsary, Darul Haq, and Najla Press.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Ahmad Zawawi, Jatinegara, Jakarta, March 2003.

publication of Islamic books. Its activities covered a vast area in Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Nusa Tenggara. Within this framework, Zawawi asked Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin to develop the same activities in the area of Central Java; in response, the latter established the Lajnat al-Istiqamah in Solo. This foundation evolved into the Imam al-Bukhari Foundation, which built an Islamic education complex called the Kompleks Perguruan Imam al-Bukhari in Solo.

Foundations emerged in other cities as well, but on a much smaller scale. In Semarang, for instance, Nurussunnah was created in 1993 to provide a center of activities for Salafi followers. Led by Faqih Edi Susilo, a former NII activist, and using aid from Middle Eastern foundations channeled through Al-Sofwah, it succeeded in building a mosque named Nurussunnah on land donated by Amir Ali Bawazir, a businessman of Hadrami descent, in Semarang, near the campus of the Diponegoro University.¹¹⁰ In the same year, the As-Sunnah was established in Cirebon and received considerable financial support from the Al-Sofwah Foundation.¹¹¹ In Bogor the Al-Huda Foundation was born, while in Karawang the Nidausunnah emerged. Other foundations have emerged very recently, including the Al-Rahmah and the Lembaga Dakwah dan Taklim, led by Abdullah Baharmus and Muhammad Yusuf Harun (the founder of the Al-Sofwah), respectively.

These events were not confined to Java. In South Sulawesi, for instance, M. Zaitun Rasmin, a graduate of the Medina Islamic University, set up the Wahdah Islamiyyah with support from the Al-Haramayn, the Jam'iyat Ihya' al-Turath, and the Jam'iyat Dar al-Birr (Charity House Society), a United Arab Emirates-based Salafi foundation linked to Saudi Arabia. This foundation has developed various educational institutions at different levels, including the Islamic Kindergarten, the Islamic Primary School, the Islamic Secondary School, and the College for the Study of Islam and Arabic (Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Islam dan Bahasa Arab, STIIBA). It also has a magazine, a radio station, and several retail business centers.¹¹²

The emergence of the foundations contributed to the growth of the burgeoning Salafi communities, which, beginning in the 1990s, no longer needed to organize their activities secretly owing to the shift in state policy towards political Islam. At the end of the 1980s, Suharto introduced an Islamization strategy focusing particularly on the accentuation of Islamic symbols in public discourse and accommodating religious socio-political forces. A number of organizations and institutions that made use of Islamic symbols appeared on the scene. The Islamic Court Bill, reinforcing the existence of the Islamic courts within the Indonesian legal system, was subsequently introduced, followed by the Presidential Decree on the Compilation of Islamic Law. Islamic *shari'a* banks and insurance companies sprang up during this period, and thousands of mosques were built under the sponsorship of the state.

While overt Islamic political and social activities were being endorsed at the state level, growing numbers of people in popular and elite circles adopted symbolic expressions of Islam, such as wearing the *jilbab* and making the *hajj* to Mecca. Suharto himself and his family decided to perform this ritual. Most importantly, the

¹¹⁰ Interview with Faqih Edi Susilo, Semarang, February 2003.

¹¹¹ Interview with Diding Sabaruddin, the secretary of the Yayasan As-Sunnah, Cirebon, February 2003.

¹¹² Interview with Bahrudin Nida Amin, the right-hand man of M. Zaitun Rasmin, and Lukman Abdus Samad, the director of Ma'had 'Ali, Makassar, May 2003.

Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association, ICMI) was established under Suharto's patronage, and Habibie, as a close associate of Suharto, was appointed the leader of the organization.¹¹³ In the wake of the introduction of this conservative Islamization strategy, the state made a drastic move away from its former secular position; in response to this change in policy, prominent Muslim figures strode confidently onto the political scene. This shift diluted the tension and conflict that for so long had had overshadowed interactions between Suharto and Islamist figures around DDII, and led to the establishment of linkages between the two camps. DDII felt confident acting in the political arena of the state, and a particular wing of the organization, Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World, KISDI), which had been established in 1987, began mobilizing rallies and demonstrations to call for Indonesian solidarity in support of Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Kashmir, and other trouble spots. The appearance of this organization was followed by the expansion of Islamist print media, such as *Suara Hidayatullah* and *Sabili*.

Some scholars see this shift as a positive act of accommodation by the New Order toward members of a new Muslim middle class who had accepted the Pancasila and supported the New Order's ideology of development.¹¹⁴ Several facts indicate that the legitimacy crisis then being experienced by a regime more than twenty years in power contributed a great deal to this shift. Indeed, at the end of the 1980s, Suharto was losing the support of his political pillars, particularly the army. Then pro-democracy groups came on the scene to demand changes, further destabilizing the regime.¹¹⁵ Suharto was apparently seeking to shore up his legitimacy by relying on pro-Muslim gestures to consolidate his power. As William Liddle rightly puts it, this shift was part of Suharto's political strategy to hold onto power.¹¹⁶

POST-GULF WAR DRIFT

The increased interest of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in Salafi foundations clearly had something to do with the impact of the Gulf War, which was triggered by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Saddam Hussein, who had been supported by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in his battle against Iran, now claimed himself to be a liberator of Arab countries in the grasp of Western power. He threatened neighboring Arab countries by placing his forces at the borders. In response, Saudi Arabia invited American troops to guard its territory. Saudi Arabia even gave the coalition forces permission to establish a base inside its territory from

¹¹³ Bruinessen, "Islamic State or State Islam?," pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁴ See R. W. Hefner, "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class," *Indonesia* 56 (October 1993): 1-35; Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia* (PhD dissertation, Ohio University, 1994); and M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995).

¹¹⁵ For a detailed discussion, see Douglas Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹¹⁶ R. William Liddle, "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55,3 (1996): 631.

which they launched counter-attacks to liberate Kuwait. Since then, the United States has built huge military bases and deployed troops on Saudi Arabian soil.

The presence of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil unleashed storms of protest. As in other Muslim countries, anti-American sentiments fanned by Saddam Hussein gained popular support. People praised Saddam as a heroic leader who dared to resist what they believed to be the tyranny of the West. Saudi Arabia's decision to invite American troops inside its borders was certainly not popular.¹¹⁷ Criticism of this policy was particularly vociferous among a new brand of Islamists who were predominantly urban and university-educated, who had mastered the language both of Islam and of modern concepts of rational government. They were the new generation of Wahhabis who had enthusiastically welcomed the Wahhabi resurgence a decade earlier.¹¹⁸

In response to their criticism, the Hai'at Kibar al-'Ulama (Committee of the Senior 'Ulama) led by Bin Baz, the principal Wahhabite ideologue, issued a fatwa legitimizing the presence of the American troops. It should be noted that as an institution sponsored by Saudi Arabia, the Hai'at Kibar al-'Ulama enjoys unprecedented power and authority, far outweighing its counterparts in other Muslim countries.¹¹⁹ Yet this fatwa elicited criticism from a number of personalities, like Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-'Auda. They considered it to be proof that the committee had been co-opted by the interests of Saudi Arabia rather than of Islam.¹²⁰ Both were Muslim Brotherhood cadres and drew great inspiration from Sayyid Qutb's brother, Muhammad Qutb, who had lived in Saudi Arabia and had influenced several universities, particularly the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud Islamic University and the Umm al-Qura University of Mecca.¹²¹ Their criticism reverberated forcefully via other personalities, such as Muhammad bin Surur al-Nayef Zayn al-'Abidin. He is a Muslim Brotherhood refugee from Egypt who had been active in popularizing the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood in Saudi Arabia before moving to Kuwait. In response to the fatwa issued by the Hai'at Kibar al-'Ulama, he condemned the 'ulama and joined those accusing the Hai'at Kibar al-'Ulama of being slaves of the United States.¹²²

A similar discourse also awoke storms in other Gulf countries. In Kuwait, 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq, a graduate of the Medina Islamic University, who was actively engaged in the Salafi *da'wa*, launched a harsh volley of criticism against the Hai'at Kibar al-'Ulama. He condemned the members of this committee, castigating them as 'ulama who had no comprehension of Islam and who acted only in the interests of the regime. In Qatar, Yusuf Qaradawi, an activist of the Muslim Brotherhood working at the University of Qatar, criticized Bin Baz for issuing a

¹¹⁷ John L. Esposito, "Political Islam and Gulf Security," in Esposito, *Political Islam*, pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁸ R. Hrair Dekmejian, "The Rise of Political Islamism in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal* 48,4 (1991): 627-43.

¹¹⁹ Farouk A. Sankari, "Islam and Politics in Saudi Arabia," in *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*, ed. Ali E. Hillah Dessouki (New York, NY: Praeger, 1982), pp. 185-88. See also Frank E. Vogel, *Islamic Law and Legal System: Studies of Saudi Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 83-117.

¹²⁰ Cf. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, pp. 213-17.

¹²¹ As'ad Abukhalil, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2004), pp. 122-23.

¹²² I am grateful to Stephane Lacroix and Guido Steinberg, two scholars concerned with the issue of Islam and politics in Saudi Arabia, for their information about this figure.

fatwa legitimizing the attempt to bring about a peace process with Israel. In response to this fatwa, Qaradawi argued that there could only be peace (*sulh*) when Israel redressed the injustices created by its colonization of Palestinian soil. In his eyes, accepting the Israel's claims to sovereignty over Palestinian territory is an unforgivable mistake.¹²³

Afghan war veterans whose experience of conducting a jihad was still fresh lost no time in launching their criticism of the Saudi royal family and Saudi Arabia's religious establishment. Under the leadership of Bin Laden, whose proposal to invite Afghan war veterans to fight Saddam Hussein had been rejected by the Saudi rulers, they condemned the Saudi Arabian policy of inviting the Americans into the country and asked the official Saudi *ulama* to issue fatwas against non-Muslims based in the country. The Bin Laden-led protest marked the rise of Salafi jihadis, to use Kepel's term, who reiterated the call for a global jihad that now included the Saudi government in its list of enemy regimes.¹²⁴ They adopted 'Azzam's original call to defend the Muslim community in Afghanistan and advocated extending the duration of jihad indefinitely, moving into a permanent jihad against what they perceived as infidel oppression associated with the so-called "Judeo-Crusader" coalition led by the United States. This group of activists evolved into the network known today as al Qaeda, which in 1998 issued a manifesto under the aegis of "The World Islamic Front for jihad against Jews and Crusaders."¹²⁵

In response to this criticism, Saudi Arabia implemented several repressive policies. Public meetings and discussions were prohibited, and hundreds of activists were arrested. It banned the circulation of cassette recordings and pamphlets that criticized Saudi Arabia and the religious establishment. But this policy backfired, because it triggered violence and terrorism. In late 1995, bombs exploded near the American military base and at the training center of the National Guard, in Dahrn, killing a dozen American officers.¹²⁶

Rising radicalism proved that the Saudis' attempts to repress internal criticism of the regime had instead fueled it. The use of Islam, especially Wahhabism, to legitimize its policies has become a doubled-edged sword. As Mai Yamani rightly puts it:

Although it [Saudi Arabia] has provided a set of unifying cultural symbols, it has also produced a vocabulary that can be deployed to criticize the ruling elite and call for a change in the direction of government policy. Such demands are hard for the state to crack down on because they are framed in the same terms as the language the state uses to legitimate itself. The government is caught between two broad sections of the new generation with different perceptions of the role of religion within society.¹²⁷

¹²³ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "Islamists and the Peace Process," in Esposito, *Political Islam*, pp. 218-19.

¹²⁴ Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, p. 219.

¹²⁵ See Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 45. See also Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 134.

¹²⁶ Esposito, "Political Islam and Gulf Security," pp. 62-63.

¹²⁷ Mai Yamani, *Changed Identities: The Challenge of the New Generation in Saudi Arabia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), p. 45.

More importantly perhaps, those who are raised on and believe in Wahhabi teachings cannot be satisfied with the state of affairs within Saudi Arabia.¹²⁸

The point to be stressed here is that the tension and conflict that flared up in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Gulf War had a great impact on the development of the Salafi *da'wa* movement in Indonesia. Yet over time disagreements arose among the protagonists of this movement, leading to a schism in the ranks, the issue that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

¹²⁸ Abukhalil, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia*, p. 144.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF JA`FAR UMAR THALIB

Having succeeded in establishing an exclusivist current of Islamic activism in Indonesian universities, the Salafi movement began spreading beyond campuses at the beginning of the 1990s. Under these changing political conditions, movement members organized *halqas* ("circle," a forum for the study of Islamic sciences) and *dauras* ("turn," a type of workshop) openly in mosques located on the outskirts of cities and in rural villages. As a result, enclaves of members sprung up, followed by the construction of mosques and Islamic schools erected under the banner of the movement. Through religious activities organized systematically and openly, a sense of solidarity and group identity was born that fostered a growing network. The publication of pamphlets, bulletins, journals, and books provided communication channels through which Salafi messages were disseminated to a broader audience.

Nevertheless, the rapid proliferation of the Salafi movement was accompanied by increasing tension among its protagonists in their competition for the position as the movement's legitimate representative. All claimed to be authentic Salafis committed to the movement's goal of purity. One contender accused his rivals of being affiliated with Muhammad ibn Surur al-Nayef Zayn al-'Abidin, who, as we have seen in the previous chapter, had fiercely criticized the Saudi Arabian government and its religious establishment over the presence of American troops on Saudi soil. The implication was that those accused were potentially violent jihadis who did not accept the existing Indonesian government as legitimate. Fragmentation and conflict among the Salafis became inevitable. They split into two main currents: the so-called Sururis and non-Sururis. In the competition for membership and support, the two groups exploited transnational alliances, and in so doing reinforced their own networks.

The dynamics of the Salafi movement reflect the complexity of what Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori refer to as "Muslim politics," which is defined as the competition over the interpretation of religious symbols and control of institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them.¹ These two theorists apply the definition to a variety of regional and transnational contexts in the Muslim world,

¹ Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 5-11. Their emphasis on the symbolic aspect of politics follows the tendency that has developed among social anthropologists. Its forerunner was Clifford Geertz, who in his *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), proposed a famous definition of religion as "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." But this definition has been criticized by Talal Asad, who argues that Geertz's view on religion as a belief system designed ultimately to confront questions of meaning reflects modern biases arising from Enlightenment Christianity. For a further account on this criticism, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 42-47.

within which contests over political institutions and symbols take place. The distinctiveness of Muslim politics, they argue, lies in its salient symbolic dimension, which sustains the multiplicity of interpretations within shifting contexts, evolving meanings, and the usage of symbols, values, tradition, and ethnicity. Because of the centrality of symbolism, language plays a crucial role, as it is through language that symbols are expressed and defined. They suggest that the symbolic and persuasive dimension of Muslim politics has become virtually synonymous with the politics of language.

The process of articulating symbolic politics and dominant values establishes boundaries that demarcate decision-making units in society and areas within and beyond state control. Because of their ambiguities, the boundaries are always open and subject to negotiation. Various individuals and groups thereby compete to represent the right to define boundaries in support of their organized claims and counterclaims. Religious authorities emerge as the main negotiators in this process because of they are entitled to speak for the divine presence, which further confirms their authority. Through mosques, religious lessons, Friday sermons, and grassroots organizations they produce, articulate, and disseminate an alternative interpretation to legitimate their right to claim sacred authority. Given the multiple centers of power in a society, the authorities are esteemed because they mediate among the various poles.²

Discourse is crucial to Muslim politics. As Ernesto Laclau puts it, since symbols have no "necessary body and no necessary content," different individuals and groups "instead compete among themselves to temporarily give their particularisms a function of universal representation." In this competition, one group usually attempts to exclude or subordinate another group by positioning itself as the only legitimate spokesperson for the "universal." Put another way, Laclau asserts that the universal does not have a concrete content of its own (which would confine it to itself) but is the always receding horizon resulting from the expansion of an indefinite chain of equivalent demands. In his conclusion he explains, "[s]ociety generates a whole vocabulary of empty signifiers whose temporary signifieds are the results of political competition."³

The central figure who defined the dynamics of the Salafi movement in Indonesia was Ja'far Umar Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad. He joined the movement when it had already solidified its existence on university campuses. This gave him frequent opportunities to deliver religious lectures and sermons among university students, activities that helped publicize and consolidate his role as a leader of the movement. He has been known among the Salafis as a preacher who dared stridently to criticize all other Islamic movements and demonstrate mistakes committed by them. This reputation made him the movement's center of attention and leading authority.

² Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, pp. 57-59.

³ Ernesto Laclau, "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity," in *The Politics of Difference*, ed. E. N. Wilmsen and P. McAllister (Chicago, IL: University Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 52-57.

HADRAMI BACKGROUND

Ja'far Umar Thalib grew up in a Hadrami family marked by great religious zeal. His grandfather, Abdullah bin Amir bin Thalib, originated from Hadramaut, a region located in present-day Yemen, where he was a prominent religious teacher. With his brothers, Abdullah migrated to the Indonesian archipelago in the second half of the nineteenth century. He ventured first to Kuala Lumpur, but soon moved to Singapore, where he remained for a few months before continuing his journey to Banjarmasin, in South Kalimantan. He lived there for a few years before moving to Madura, where he married an indigenous woman, the daughter of a respected village leader. From this marriage, Umar, the father of Thalib, was born in 1919. One year after Umar was born, Abdullah died. His uncle then took over of the care of this orphan.⁴

Umar was educated at an Islamic school in Surabaya that was affiliated with al-Irsyad, which is, as mentioned before, a reformist, modernist Muslim organization predominant among Hadramis, especially those from a non-*sayyid* ("*sayyid*," believers said to be descended from the Prophet) background. This organization was set up by the Sudanese Ahmad Surkati in Jakarta in 1914. Initially, it was an informal group of like-minded individuals seeking to raise funds to support Surkati's school. Under the influence of the puritanism of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and the Salafism of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, Surkati led the organization in calling for a purification of Muslim religious beliefs and practices, though not at the expense of modern progress. The birth of al-Irsyad contributed enormously to the dissemination of Islamic reform in Indonesia.⁵

Since their arrival, Hadramis had played a highly active role in the dynamics of Islam in the archipelago.⁶ The Shafi'ite school of law, which is the most important feature of Islam in Hadramaut, achieved predominance. Due to their prominent role, Hadramis (especially those bearing the title *sayyid*) enjoyed religious authority and initiated activities that were subscribed to by their local community, where many of them became teachers, imams, and muftis.⁷ Hadramis claimed to be the natural

⁴ This account is primarily based on my interviews with Ja'far Umar Thalib in Yogyakarta in December 2002. See also an official biography of Ja'far Umar Thalib, originally published on the website of Laskar Jihad, which is now no longer available: "Riwayat Hidup Al Ustadz Ja'far Umar Thalib," www.laskarjihad.or.id/about/cvjafar. See also "Pemberontakan Kristen Ambon Masih Berlangsung," Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Suara Hidayatullah* 8,13 (December 2000); and "Ja'far Umar Thalib, Pelopor Jihad ke Ambon," *Forum Keadilan* 7 (May 20, 2001).

⁵ On al-Irsyad, see Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 63-85. See also Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1999); Bisri Affandi, *Syaikh Ahmad Syurkatti (1874-1943) Pembaharu dan Pemurni Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1999); and Hussein Badjerei, *Al-Irsyad Mengisi Sejarah Bangsa* (Jakarta: Presto Prima Utama, 1996).

⁶ For a general survey about the presence of Hadrami immigrants in Southeast Asia, see Huub De Jonge and Nico Kaptein, "The Arab Presence in Southeast Asia: Some Introductory Remarks," in *Transcending Borders: Arab, Politics, Trade, and Islam in Southeast Asia*, ed. Huub De Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), pp. 1-20.

⁷ Peter G. Riddell, "Religious Links between Hadramaut and the Malay-Indonesian World, C. 1850 to C. 1950," in *Hadrami Traders: Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, ed. Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 220-21.

leaders of native Muslims and, given the respect they enjoyed, this appeared to be an intrinsic tendency of that group.⁸

Some researchers have pointed out that Hadramis also played an active role in the political life of host societies. They forged alliances with local elites in various kingdoms, such as East Sumatra and West Borneo. This role was supported by their success in economic activities; through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hadrami entrepreneurs excelled in and often controlled various fields of business, including finance, real estate, and trading. At the core of their economic activities was money-lending.⁹ The Dutch colonial authorities subsequently utilized the distinguished position of Hadramis for their own political interests. They did not hesitate, for instance, to make use of the international Hadrami network for diplomatic purposes. As a result of their collaboration, some members of the Hadrami elite pursued distinguished administrative careers in the Dutch colonial system.¹⁰

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, there was a reversal. The Dutch began to apply restrictive policies to Hadramis.¹¹ The backdrop of these policies was an upsurge in calls for Islamic reform, compounded by the spread of pan-Islamism fueling anti-colonial sentiments. As a consequence, the Hadramis experienced a crisis in both their political and economic affairs, which was aggravated by the rise of new religious authorities who were not Hadramis.¹² In response to these challenges, the Hadramis took steps to strengthen their perceived cultural superiority and articulated a vision of Arab ethnicity while associating themselves with the ideas of reform. One of their strategies was to establish linkages with Istanbul, the place claimed to be their politico-religious center.¹³ Within this context, affluent Hadramis from both *sayyid* and non-*sayyid* backgrounds established the Jamiatul Khair in Jakarta in 1905. The birth of this organization marked the era of awakening (*nahda*) among Hadramis; it emerged as the first modern organization among Indonesian Muslims to open Western-style schools.¹⁴

The arrival of Surkati to serve as a teacher and inspector of the Jamiatul Khair schools in 1911 brought about some fragmentation in the organization, which eventually prompted Surkati to found the al-Irsyad. He dared to criticize a number of traditions commonly honored among *sayyids*, such as kissing hands (*taqbil*) and

⁸ Sumit K. Mandal, "Natural Leaders of Native Muslims: Arab Ethnicity and Politics in Java under Dutch Rule," in *Hadhrami Traders: Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean*, p. 196.

⁹ William G. Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940," in *Hadhrami Traders: Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean*, p. 301.

¹⁰ This phenomenon has been noted since the pioneering study about Hadramis in Indonesia by L. W. C. van den Berg. See L. W. C. van den Berg, *Hadthramut and the Arab Colonies in the Indian Archipelago*, trans. C. W. H. Sealy (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1887), p. 55.

¹¹ For a further account on this issue, particularly in relation to the Dutch fears of pan-Islamism, see C. van Dijk, "Colonial Fears, 1890-1918: Pan Islamism and the Germano-Indian Plot," in De Jonge and Kaptein, eds., *Transcending Borders*, pp. 53-89; see also Michael F. Laffan, "'A Watchful Eye': the Meccan Plot of 1881 and Changing Dutch Perceptions of Islam in Indonesia," *Archipel* 63 (2002): 79-108.

¹² These reformists initially emerged in West Sumatra and were generally people returned from the Middle East; see Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement*, pp. 31-42.

¹³ Mandal, "Natural Leaders of Native Muslims," p. 196.

¹⁴ On this organization, see Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement*, pp. 58-63; Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening*, pp. 36-41.

inter-*sayyid* marriage based on an equivalence (*kafa'a*) doctrine. Surkati accepted and effectively championed this doctrine when he was asked whether an Arab woman of *sayyid* descent (*sharifa*) was allowed to marry a non-*sayyid* man. Defending the letter of the law, he answered that it was allowed according to the *shari'a*. This opinion certainly threatened the privilege enjoyed by *sayyids* and, consequently, aroused opposition. At the same time, considerable support for his ideas was provided by the newly emerging leadership among the Hadramis, particularly by those non-*sayyids* who had succeeded in carving out important political or economic positions.¹⁵

Because of Surkati's relentless efforts, al-Irsyad schools developed quickly. One of the schools was located in Surabaya, where Umar studied and was straightaway appointed a teacher after finishing the *mu'allimin*, the religious teacher's course, which was equivalent to a senior high school curriculum. Shortly after this appointment, however, he decided to quit and establish his own school in Sepajang, Sidoarjo, near Surabaya. According to Thalib, his father, Umar, was subsequently forced to flee to Malang because the Japanese who occupied Indonesia were threatening to arrest him on the grounds of his refusal to perform the symbolic bow (*saikere*). In fact, Umar had already been arrested a few months before moving to Malang. It is said that he had engaged in resistance against the British troops that landed in Surabaya on November 10, 1945, by spearheading a militia group whose membership comprised Hadrami youth in East Java. After the revolution for Indonesian independence, Umar became involved in politics, becoming a Masyumi leader in Malang. Later, he became active in the Muhammadiyah branch office of East Java, where he served as the head of its Islamic legal (*tarjih*) commission.

Ja'far Umar Thalib was born in 1961, the seventh son from Umar's marriage to Badriyah Saleh, who was also from a Hadrami family. He had a hard upbringing under the influence of his father's strict character. In his family, he was the only son to study at a religious school, so that he became the crucible into which all the ambitions of his father were poured. When still a child, he was forced to learn Arabic under the direct supervision of his father. For him, learning Arabic under such circumstances was no different from a boxer's training. "It was really a rough undertaking," he recalled. Frequently, he was beaten with rattan sticks when he failed to memorize certain Arabic words. Despite the harshness, he survived and quickly mastered Arabic. When he was seven years old, he attended a primary school in his native town, Malang.

Having completed his early education, Thalib continued his studies at secondary school, for which he chose the Pendidikan Guru Agama Negeri (State Islamic Teachers Training School, PGAN) located in the same city. His father wanted him to be a teacher of religious instruction at public schools. Thalib's zest for participating in organizational activities began to develop. Besides taking part in activities of the student organization, Thalib immersed himself in an external student organization, the Ikatan Pelajar al-Irsyad (al-Irsyad Student Association), continuing his family's tradition of devoting their lives to the al-Irsyad. The puritanical atmosphere of the organization undoubtedly played a role in forming the personality of Thalib.

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion on the conflict between *sayyids* and non-*sayyids*, see Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening*, pp. 9-107.

PERSIS LEGACY

Thalib refined his ideas of Islamic reform in another reformist organization, the Persatuan Islam (Persis), established in 1923 in Bandung by a group of Muslims under the leadership of Haji Zamzam and Haji Muhammad Yunus.¹⁶ Its existence was solidified by Ahmad Hassan, a Singaporean preacher of Tamil descent who became known as the most influential thinker and ideologue of the organization.¹⁷ Like al-Irsyad, Persis was famous for its conservatism in rejecting all forms of innovations and superstitions in Muslim religious beliefs and practices. Its main concern was to disseminate ideas of reform by organizing public meetings and debates and by opening schools that adopted modern subjects. In order to accelerate the spread of these ideas, it published pamphlets, periodicals, and books.¹⁸

Since its formation, Persis has been recognized as a politically active organization, as it holds that Muslims cannot remain aloof from politics because they have a permanent duty to regain the lost triumph of Islam.¹⁹ The engagement of Persis members in *realpolitik* began with their close involvement with the Sarekat Islam (Islamic League, SI), the first Muslim political movement in Indonesia, and led Persis into forming a bloc active in criticizing nationalism, communism, and secularism, the main themes of the Sarekat Islam. Persis subsequently immersed itself in the political activities of the Masyumi. It actively supported the Sabilillah and Hizbullah, paramilitary organizations set up by the Masyumi in the years preceding independence. As a result of its engagement in the organization, a number of its cadres, such as Muhammad Natsir and Isa Ansary, emerged as leading contributors to the political discourse of early independent Indonesia. They were at the forefront of support for the Masyumi's struggle to implement the Jakarta Charter.²⁰

The implementation of the *shari'a* as law is among Persis's most important goals and considered by members as an obligation that must be fulfilled²¹ to save Islam from the grasp of the hegemony constituted by nationalism, communism, and secularism.²² During the liberal democracy period, Persis emerged as the main advocate of the *shari'a* in the campaign pioneered by the Masyumi. Its leaders did not lose sight of the goal of establishing an Indonesian state based on Islamic principles. They repeatedly tried to propose the Jakarta Charter as the foundation of the state. This emphasis on the implementation of the *shari'a*, according to Howard M. Federspiel, resembles the Islamist ideas developed by Mawdudi:

¹⁶ For a discussion of the history of this organization, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam, 1923-1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). See also Dadan Wildan, *Pasang Surut Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia (Potret Perjalanan Sejarah Organisasi Persatuan Islam [Persis])* (Bandung: Persis Press, 2000).

¹⁷ Concerning this man's legal concepts, see Akhmad Minhaji, "Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887-1958)" (PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 1995).

¹⁸ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State*, pp. 100-17. See also Wildan, *Pasang Surut Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia*, pp. 49-75.

¹⁹ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State*, pp. 89-90.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

²¹ Interview with Shiddieq Amien, Persis chairman, Jakarta, April 2003.

²² Wildan, *Pasang Surut Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia*, p. 40.

The efforts of Mawdudi and his Jama'at-i Islami in the Pakistan period of Mawdudi's career are in some regards similar to that of the effort of the Persatuan Islam in that both suddenly existed in new nations that tested the assumptions of their belief patterns. In both cases, the stress on Islamic moorings of the state had to incorporate new thinking because their countrymen had founded states based on secular models ... Both questioned secular nationalist assumptions about the new states and attempted through political means to bring about the adoption of Islamic law and other ideas they held to be part of an Islamic state.²³

Thalib's acquaintance with Persis began when he decided to enroll in one of its most famous *pesantrens*, located in Bangil, a small town to the east of Surabaya, in 1981. He chose the *pesantren* after deciding to quit the Tarbiya (educational) Faculty of the Muhammadiyah University of Malang, where he had spent about one year, having been disappointed by the quality of its religious instruction. At that time, the *pesantren* was led by Abdul Qadir Hassan, a son of its founder, Ahmad Hassan, Thalib states that he chose the *pesantren* on the advice of his father, who enjoyed a friendship with Abdul Qadir.

The *pesantren* was established in 1940, following Ahmad Hassan's move from Bandung to Bangil, where he dedicated the rest of his life to teaching. Several Persis leaders, including Muhammad Natsir and Muhammad Salim Nabhan, were involved in its establishment. The main aim of the *pesantren* is "to produce Muslim preachers who can play an important role in combating the *bid'a* (unwholesome innovations) and *khurafa* (superstitions) proliferating in society, under the slogan of a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna." To achieve this aim, the *pesantren* has five main agenda points, including (1) implanting the spirit of jihad and *ijtihad*; (2) implanting the pure spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunna; (3) implanting a corrective attitude to all notions opposing the Qur'an and the Sunna; (4) implementing the principles of Islamic law; and (5) developing the tradition of dialogue.²⁴

One of the *pesantren*'s teachers, Umar Fananie, perceived Thalib's militant character as soon as he enrolled. In Fananie's opinion, Thalib was unable to keep silent whenever he witnessed behavior he considered to be *bid'a*, and he could be aggressive, for he often criticized his own teachers as too lax in combating different forms of deviations from the Qur'an and Sunna. At the same time, Fananie also asserted that Thalib was a diligent student who spent much of his time in the library, behavior that succeeded in winning him a considerable degree of trust from Abdul Qadir, who appointed him as his assistant in answering various religious questions posed by the readers of *al-Muslimun*, the periodical associated with the *pesantren*.²⁵

Al-Muslimun is the most important periodical that has ever been produced by Persis. It is particularly concerned with various issues related to Islamic law. The "Question and Answer" (*Sual-Djawab*) feature, handled by Abdul Qadir, usually appears among the first pages, followed by a discussion about the Prophetic

²³ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State*, pp. 290-91.

²⁴ Pesantren Persis, *Sejarah Ringkas Pesantren Persis Bangil* (Bangil: Pesantren Persis, 1986), pp. 9-10.

²⁵ Interview with Umar Fananie, one of the dedicated teachers of the *pesantren* who has served at the school for many years, Bangil, February 2003.

Tradition (*Hadith*) and Quranic Exegesis (*Tafsir*).²⁶ Although these columns constitute the main contents of *al-Muslimun*, comments on current issues such as the *khilafa*, secularization, the putative Zionist conspiracy, Christianization, and the like have also become popular features. Launched in 1954 by Abdullah Musa, a son-in-law of Ahmad Hassan, *al-Muslimun* ground to a halt in 1960, though it appeared in fits and starts throughout the decade. At the beginning of the 1970s, Musa asked his brother, Tajuddin, to manage it, and it once again prospered. In the late 1980s its popularity reached its peak; at that time, as many as two thousand copies were being printed per edition.²⁷

Thalib spent only one and a half years in the *pesantren*. He dropped out in 1985, shortly after Abdul Qadir died. Recognizing the advantages of study at LIPIA, he decided to go to Jakarta to register himself at the institute and was accepted. Besides learning Arabic, one of his salient interests at that time was reading *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, by Qutb, an exegesis of the Qur'an that stands as this author's *magnum opus*. He claims to have admired the thoughts of this ideologue before becoming fully aware of some of their deviations from the true path of Islam. While a student, Thalib was active in the central leadership of the al-Irsyad Student Association. Eventually, he was appointed its leader. In this capacity, he spearheaded the group's opposition to the Pancasila and was detained several times for interrogation by military intelligence agents who accused him of being involved in radical activities following the Tanjung Priok Affair in September 1984.

Thalib eventually dropped out of LIPIA, having become embroiled in a conflict with one of his teachers, Muhammad Yasin al-Khattib. He repudiated the subject al-Khattib taught, arguing that this Iraqi teacher assigned a book that was devoid of Qur'anic and Sunna references: *Matn al-Ghaya wa al-Taqrīb* by Ahmad bin Hasan Abu Shuja' al-Isfahani (1053-1106). This is the shortest and simplest text of traditional Shafi'i *fiqh* studied in the traditional Nahdlatul Ulama *pesantrens*. However, the then-director of LIPIA, 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd Allah al-'Amr, showed interest in the dissatisfied student and offered him an opportunity to go abroad. In 1986, Thalib received a scholarship on the recommendation of the director to study at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute in Lahore, Pakistan. There is little information about Thalib's experiences there. He claims to have had an opportunity to take courses only in the first semester, during which he applied himself to basic subjects of Islamic studies.

The Mawdudi Islamic Institute is an educational institution directly linked to the Jama'at-i Islami party of Pakistan. It was originally set up in 1982 within the headquarters of the party, the Mansoor complex, and was the result of an initiative by Mawdudi, who had received support from the Saudi Arabian government. Its curriculum combines both non-religious and religious subjects, including English, economics, political science, sociology, history, Qur'anic studies, Prophetic tradition studies, Islamic law, Islamic theology, and "ethics and morals." The non-religious subjects are taught in English, the religious in Arabic. Its main goal is to produce cadres for Islamist movements prepared to spearhead a global Islamic resurgence.²⁸

²⁶ For a detailed discussion on the profile of this periodical during the first six years of its existence (1954-1960), see Howard Federspiel, "The Political and Social Language of Indonesian Muslims: The Case of *Al-Muslimun*," *Indonesia* 38 (October 1984): 55-73.

²⁷ Interview with Shadid Abdullah Musa, Bangil, February 2003.

²⁸ On this institute, see Farish A. Noor, "Victims of Superpower Politics? The Uncertain Fate of ASEAN Students in the *Madrasahs* of Pakistan in the Age of the 'War Against Terror'" (paper

AFGHAN EXPERIENCE

After less than a year at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute, Thalib volunteered to join the *mujahidin* in the Afghan War. This was not surprising, as many other students were also volunteering. First, he reported to the al-Khayriyya military training camp in Peshawar, which became the headquarters of volunteer fighters from Syria.²⁹ It is of interest to note that the Rabitat al-`Alam al-Islami and other Arab Islamist organizations responsible for recruiting volunteer fighters worldwide frequently covered up their true purpose by claiming that these recruits were taking religious courses at different educational institutions in Pakistan. Once there, however, it is alleged the volunteers were diverted to regional camps where they received intensive instruction in the techniques of unconventional warfare.³⁰

In 1987, Thalib began his engagement in the Afghan War. He claims to have initially joined the Hizb-i Islami led by Gulbudin Hekmatyar, before being sent to assist the Jami`at-i Islami led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. It was common for volunteer fighters to rotate from one faction to another in assisting Afghan *mujahidin*.³¹ For ideological reasons, however, Thalib eventually preferred to support the Jama`at al-Da`wa ila al-Qur`an wa Ahl-i Hadith, a strict Salafi faction and Saudi Arabian "principality" led by Jamil al-Rahman. This faction had special relations with Pakistani Ahl-i Hadith, a reformist movement founded in the Indian subcontinent in the nineteenth century that shares many similarities with Wahhabism, particularly in terms of its repudiation of traditional practices, such as visiting the Prophet's grave.³²

Because of its similarities to Wahhabism, the Ahl-i Hadith movement has been criticized by the *`ulama* of the Hanafite school, the dominant *madhhab* in the Indian subcontinent, as a front for the Wahhabis, whom they regard as enemies of Islam for their fierce opposition to the adoration of the Prophet and the Sufi saints and the practice of *taqlid* (acceptance of medieval Islamic scholarly authorities). The same criticism came from the Deoband *`ulama*, who, although they adopted ideas of Islamic reform and were thus ideologically close to Wahhabism, accused Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab of preaching false belief. Recently, their conflict flared up during the Ahl-i Hadith's campaign to denounce its ideological rivals, which was pursued to win the support of Saudi Arabia.³³ Jamil al-Rahman himself

presented at the conference on "The *Madrasah* in Asia: Transnationalism and their Alleged or Real Political Linkages," jointly organized by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World [ISIM, Leiden] and the *Zentrum für Moderner Orient* [Center for Modern Orient Studies, ZMO, Berlin], in Leiden on May 23-25, 2004).

²⁹ See "Putra Malang Alumnus Perang Afghanistan," *Gatra* (August 5, 2001).

³⁰ See Peter Chalk, "Militant Islamic Extremism in the Southern Philippines," in *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities*, ed. Jason F. Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), p. 198.

³¹ For a detailed discussion on this issue, see Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil, and Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000).

³² Concerning the Ahl-i Hadith, see Barbara D. Metcalf, "Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs," *ISIM Papers* (Leiden: ISIM, 2002), p. 6. See also Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 20-21.

³³ See Yoginder Sikand, "Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection" (paper presented at the workshop on "South-South Linkages in Islam: Translocal

was a graduate of a religious school of the Ahl-i Hadith in Panjpir sponsored directly by Saudi Arabia. Before establishing this faction, he had joined Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami.³⁴ The Jama'at al-Da'wa was also linked to the Laskar-i-Tayyiba, an offshoot of the Markaz Da'wa wal Irshad, which was ideologically affiliated to the Ahl-i Hadith.³⁵

The Jama'at al-Da'wa set up its base in Kunar, an isolated province beyond the control of central authority. Given its closeness to Wahhabism, many Salafi jihad volunteers from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Yemen preferred to join this faction. With the support of private sources in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, it evolved into a strong faction that seized overwhelming control of Kunar and established the so-called *Shura* Council there. What is intriguing is that it applied the doctrine of *takfir*, requiring Muslims to excommunicate any ruler considered apostate and resort to violence, if necessary. Afghans who lived in the areas controlled by the government were treated as infidels subject to the rules of *futuh* (conquest), which allowed killing men who resisted and taking women and children as prisoners.³⁶

Of all the factions, the Jama'at al-Da'wa developed the most hostile attitude towards non-Muslims and the West, all written off as the enemies of Islam. Its fighters frequently attacked journalists and humanitarian workers, whom they accused of being agents of the West. But this faction's engagement on the political scene of Afghanistan ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union; at that time, it retreated from the political struggle for power. Jamil al-Rahman himself then became the target of assassination attempts by his rivals. Jama'at al-Da'wa veterans devoted their time to conducting what they believed to be *da'wa* activities. Resorting to iconoclasm, they destroyed statues and monuments and attacked local religious practices they considered anathema to Islam.³⁷ As indicated in the previous chapter, the name of Jamil al-Rahman was later immortalized by the Indonesian Salafis, who named a mosque in Kaliurang after him.

The influence of the Afghan episode on Thalib cannot be underestimated. This experience allowed him to make contact with other volunteer fighters and explore ideas and ideologies in an environment based on the ethos of jihad. He claims to have shared a tent with Abdul Rasul Sayyaf³⁸ and to have had contact with Bin Laden.³⁹ Unquestionably, Afghanistan provided him with the opportunity to learn how to use weapons and explosives, and taught him a variety of war tactics and strategies. A number of his followers have proudly described Thalib's abilities in using various modern weapons and his claim to have heroically shot down five

Agents, Ideas, Lifeworlds [Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries]," held by Center for Modern Oriental Studies [ZMO] in Berlin, November 5–6, 2004).

³⁴ Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 118.

³⁵ Zahab and Roy, *Islamist Networks*, p. 38. For further information about the Laskar-i-Tayyiba, see Saeed Shafqat, "Religious Groups: Rise of Da'wa-ul-Irshad/Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and the Problem of Democratic Framework in Pakistan" (paper presented in the seminar organized by Pakistan Study Groups, Paris, December 13, 1999).

³⁶ Rubin, "Arab Islamists in Afghanistan," pp. 196–97.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

³⁸ In various interviews with me, a number of Ja'far Umar Thalib's lieutenants recounted the experience of their leader, whom they reported to have shared a tent with Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the leader of the Jami'at-i Islami of Afghan *mujahidin* faction.

³⁹ On this information, see C. Richard Paddock, "Laskar Jihad Leader Offers His Views," at www.thedailycamera.com.

Soviet helicopters with one missile. The experience also stimulated his spirit of combat as well as his militant opposition to what he perceived as Western-inspired secular tyranny. No less important is that during the war he directly witnessed how Wahhabi doctrines were implemented by Afghan *mujahidin* and jihadi volunteers associated with the Wahhabi-supported factions. All these influences undoubtedly helped to explain the direction he took upon his return to Indonesia in 1989.

PESANTREN AL-IRSYAD TENGARAN

Upon his return to Indonesia, Thalib became immediately involved in teaching activities in a newly established *pesantren* affiliated with the al-Irsyad. This *pesantren* is located in Tenganan, Salatiga, around one hundred kilometers from Semarang, and is known as the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tenganan. On the basis of the recommendation of the then-LIPIA director, al-`Amr, Thalib was appointed as both the director of and a teacher in the *pesantren*. In running this *pesantren*, Thalib was not alone. He was assisted by Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, another scholar of Hadrami descent who, as mentioned in the previous chapter, had just completed his studies with Muhammad bin Salih al-`Uthaymin, a prominent religious figure who runs a well-known Salafi teaching center in Najran, located in the southern part of Saudi Arabia, near its border with Yemen.

The return of Thalib was welcomed enthusiastically by some segments of al-Irsyad's membership. Since the beginning of the 1980s, discontent had emerged within this organization; some of its important personalities felt it was undergoing an identity crisis. As far as they were concerned, al-Irsyad, which had been prominent in the dynamics of Islamic discourse in Indonesia, had lost its vitality in conjunction with the marginalization of Muslim politics by Suharto. More than that, they argued that the young generation of al-Irsyad members was no longer capable of reading and speaking Arabic. In their analysis, this problem arose in part from the fading reputation of al-Irsyad schools, which had failed to compete with other private schools in improving the quality of their education. Also, the dissatisfied members regretted that al-Irsyad, as an Islamic organization concerned with the progress of Islamic education, did not possess any *pesantren* regarded as centers of excellence for the production of religious authorities.⁴⁰

The history of the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tenganan reflects to some extent the concern of some al-Irsyad leaders with this matter. Its establishment started with an initiative of Umar Abdat, a Hadrami businessman and the chairman of the al-Irsyad branch office in Semarang. He was inspired by a discussion with Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, the head of the famous modernist Pesantren Gontor in Ponorogo, East Java,⁴¹ while he was visiting his son, Tariq Umar Abdat, who was studying there. In response to the curiosity expressed by Umar Abdat, Zarkasyi said, "Actually, it is we who should learn from you how to teach Arabic." This discussion eventually led

⁴⁰ Interview with Husein Maskaty and M. Masdun Pranoto, Jakarta, March 2003.

⁴¹ Concerning this *pesantren*, see Husnan Bey Fananie, "Modernism in Islamic Education in Indonesia and India: A Case Study of the Pondok Modern Gontor and Aligarh" (Masters thesis, Leiden University, 1997). See also Lance Castles, *Pondok Pesantren, Kiai dan Ulama dengan Sejarah, Jasa dan Fungsinya dalam Pembangunan: Sebuah Antologi* (Ponorogo: Pondok Modern Gontor, 1973).

Umar Abdat to establish the *pesantren* in Tengaran, which he intended to counterbalance the domination of the Gontor.⁴²

Nevertheless, the realization of his dream was not as easy to achieve as had been expected, since the central leadership of al-Irsyad was unwilling to provide any support. Umar Abdat did not give up. He submitted his proposal to the then-LIPIA director al-`Amr, who welcomed it with enthusiasm and gave him a recommendation to meet a high official of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. Abdat traveled to Saudi Arabia for this meeting, and the minister apparently perceived his initiative as an opportunity to start paying more serious attention to the development of Islamic *da`wa* and education in Indonesia. There is an impression among some al-Irsyad leaders that Saudi Arabia considered that its ongoing cooperation with their organization had hitherto produced no significant contribution for the development of the two fields.⁴³ This concern, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, developed alongside Saudi Arabian efforts to increase the number of Indonesian students studying in the Middle East.

Umar Abdat's visit to Saudi Arabia proved fruitful. He received forty million rupiah, with which he set about establishing the *pesantren*. In the process of building the *pesantren*, two emissaries from the ministry came to carry out an inspection. These two emissaries gave Umar Abdat their approval, and he was promised additional financial support. Eventually, a two-story building was finished in 1987, and teaching began in 1988 with forty students. Mahmud Sulhan, a graduate of the Pesantren Gontor and Umm al-Qura University, Mecca, was appointed as the school's first director. The curriculum of the *pesantren* combined religious and non-religious subjects, with an emphasis on the teaching of Arabic.⁴⁴

Only one year after the school opened, two emissaries dispatched by al-`Amr visited Tengaran to observe the development of the *pesantren*. Before returning to Jakarta, both emissaries warned Tariq, Umar Abdat's son, who was representing his ailing father, that "Sulhan, the then-*pesantren* director, only looks like a Salafi, in fact he is a Nahdi, an adherent of the Nahdlatul Ulama." A few days later, Al-`Amr ordered Umar Abdat to replace Mahmud Sulhan with someone he would appoint.⁴⁵ Shortly after that, Thalib and Jawwas came to the *pesantren* charged with the mission of introducing changes so that the school's teachings would conform more closely with Wahhabite doctrines.

Their attempts to revise the educational program of the *pesantren* represented the growing aspiration of al-Irsyad to return to the original spirit of reform. This organization was perceived to have deviated from its original mission, namely, to purify Indonesian Islam from corrupting innovations, superstitions, and polytheism.

⁴² Interview with Tariq Umar Abdat, Semarang, February 2003.

⁴³ Interview with Ali Bin Bur, former secretary general of al-Irsyad, Jakarta, March 2003.

⁴⁴ Interview with Nizar Abdul Jabal, the Director of the Pesantren, Salatiga, February 2003.

⁴⁵ Interview with Tariq Umar Abdat, Semarang, February 2003.



Figure I: Ja'far Umar Thalib, the commander-in-chief of Laskar Jihad
(Courtesy of *Tempo*, May 20, 2001)

Such an aspiration was particularly expressed by young cadres who had completed their studies in the Middle East.⁴⁶ They acted as the main supporters of Farouk Zein Badjabir, who succeeded Geys Amar as the chairman of al-Irsyad in 1999 through an extraordinary session held in Tawangmangu, Central Java.⁴⁷ A similar phenomenon has occurred in Persis. Some segments of its membership, particularly those who graduated from Middle Eastern universities, have persistently argued that Persis can no longer fulfill its role as a reform organization because it has neglected its original mission—to purify Muslim beliefs and practices—and failed to contribute significantly to the political dynamics of the *umma*.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Interview with A. Farid Okbah, Jakarta, October 2002.

⁴⁷ This succession resulted in a serious conflict in al-Irsyad, which is now divided into two factions: al-Irsyad Kramat Raya and al-Irsyad Jatinegara. Interview with Farouk Zein Badjabir, Jakarta, March 2003.

⁴⁸ Interview with M. Taufik Rahman, Asep S. Minbar, and Badri Chaeruman, Bandung, April 2003. Representatives of the younger generation of Persis have published a book entitled, "Is Persis ready to be a reform organization again?: An attempt to promote the discourse of new

The arrival of Thalib and Jawwas did indeed bring some fundamental changes to the *pesantren* at Tenganan. Both taught students Wahhabi doctrines in a more austere manner, forbidding them to post pictures of humans or animals, pay respects to the flag, watch television, smoke, or even listen to music. Students were also obliged to grow long beards and wear an Arab-style uniform.⁴⁹ The doctrines implanted by Thalib and Jawwas had a great impact on the students. When returning home for the holidays, they shocked their parents by removing pictures, radios, and televisions from their homes. A number of these dismayed parents came to al-Irsyad branch offices to question the education received by their children.⁵⁰

With Thalib and Jawwas preoccupied with their task of popularizing Wahhabi doctrines, al-Irsyad sent Yusuf Usman Baisa, who had just completed his studies at the Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud University in Riyadh, to teach in the *pesantren*; this decision was based on a LIPIA recommendation. Baisa was appointed deputy-director, replacing Jawwas.⁵¹ In addition to teaching activities, these three teachers took part in the dissemination of Salafi messages among university students, as indicated earlier. This mission ultimately became their main concern, to the extent that they finally gave up teaching at the *pesantren*. All of them were active in responding to the invitations from the early proponents of the Salafi movement to deliver religious lectures and sermons in different cities, including Yogyakarta, Solo, and Semarang. It is likely that they did not want to be left behind in the campaign to spread Wahhabi doctrines, a proselytizing effort whose pioneers had been non-Hadrami Muslims, such as Abu Nida and Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin. As a result, the *pesantren* in Tenganan emerged as one of the most important links in the dissemination of the Salafi movement in Indonesia.

Criticism from the students' parents was treated with disdain by Thalib. Undeterred, he maintained his leadership style and pursued his ambition to impose ideological uniformity on his students. It was not long before Thalib's relations with al-Irsyad degenerated. The anxiety of the students' parents concerning the impact of these lessons on their children grew proportionally. They demanded that the al-Irsyad branch office in Semarang, which was directly responsible for the *pesantren*, curb this militant tendency. In response to their pressure, the branch organized a meeting in Pekalongan to deal with the Tenganan affair. Attended by several representatives of the central leadership of al-Irsyad, the meeting concluded with a decision to replace Thalib with Baisa. Thalib considered this action unfair and decided to resign. His resignation was followed by those of Jawwas and Baisa.⁵²

This vacuum in leadership was not protracted, as Tariq Umar Abdat, the then-chairman of the al-Irsyad branch of Semarang, succeeded in persuading Baisa to return to the *pesantren* and serve as its director. This enraged Thalib, who saw Baisa's decision as a betrayal. The same feeling of disgruntlement afflicted Jawwas, who cut off contact with Baisa. Under the leadership of Baisa, who received full support from al-Irsyad, the *pesantren* developed rapidly and flourished. New buildings were

Persis." See Lutfi Lukman Hakim, ed., *Siapkah Persis Menjadi Mujaddid Lagi?: Upaya Mewujudkan Wacana Persis Baru* (Bandung: Alqaprint, 2000).

⁴⁹ Interview with Azhar Cholid Sef, a former student of Ja'far Umar Thalib, at the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tenganan, Jakarta, January 2003.

⁵⁰ Interview with Tariq Omar Abdat, Semarang, February 2003.

⁵¹ Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, February 2003.

⁵² Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, February 2003.

finished, complementing the existing buildings, thanks to financial support from Saudi Arabia. In exchange, Saudi Arabia insisted on the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the *pesantren* and determine its curriculum. Since 1994, LIPIA has even received visiting teachers from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. Hundreds of its graduates continued their studies at LIPIA or at universities in Saudi Arabia, particularly Medina Islamic University.⁵³

REVITALIZING THE YEMENI CONNECTION

Having decided to quit the *pesantren* in 1990, Thalib went to Yemen, allegedly using the connections he had built during his engagement in the Afghan War. His journey to Yemen had a specific aim, namely to deepen his insights into Wahhabi teachings with a Yemeni teacher, Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, known as a Salafi ideologue *par excellence*, bearing the honorific title of "Muhaddith al-Yaman" (the specialist in the Prophetic Traditions in Yemen). However, Thalib did not really have much of an opportunity to study with him. As soon as he arrived in Yemen, he succumbed to a serious illness. After three months, he decided to go home. But this short period in Yemen left a deep impression on him. He could not forget the generosity of al-Wadi'i, who once came to his room to give him some camel's milk.

Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i gained recognition as a Salafi authority during his lifetime, and his influence has been growing since the early 1980s. His knowledge of Wahhabism was forged by two decades of study in Saudi Arabia. Initially, he studied in the Salafi teaching center developed by al-'Uthaymin in Najran, before enrolling at the Medina Islamic University.⁵⁴ During this period, he attended the *halqas* of prominent Salafi authorities, such as Bin Baz and al-Albani. After he was accused of having been involved in the Juhayman-led attack on the Meccan sanctuary, he was arrested. He languished in a Saudi prison for several months before being released thanks to the intervention of Bin Baz; he was subsequently deported to his native land.⁵⁵

Back in Yemen, al-Wadi'i began to spread Wahhabism first by establishing the Madrasa Dar al-Hadith al-Khayriyya in Dammaj, his native tribal region east of Sa'da. In his efforts to promulgate these teachings, he faced various challenges, particularly from the foes of Wahhabis, namely Shafi'is, Isma'ilis, and Zaydis, who have traditionally dominated Sa'da. They did not want the doctrines taught by al-Wadi'i to prevail and usurp their dominant position. In fact, al-Wadi'i had felt the bitterness of the challenges posed by his foes, particularly the Zaydi *sayyids*, even

⁵³ Interview with Nizar Abdul Jabal, February 2003. For a profile of this *pesantren*, see "Ma'had al-Irsyad al-Islamy," *Brochure* (Salatiga: Ma'had al-Irsyad al-Islamy, 2001). See also www.alirsyad.8m.net.

⁵⁴ One of the most important works of al-'Uthaymin is *Aqidat Ahl al-Sunna wa'l Jama'a*, which is translated into Indonesian to become *Aqidah Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Yayasan al-Sofwa, 1995).

⁵⁵ Bernard Haykel, "The Salafis in Yemen at a Crossroads: An obituary of Shaykh Muqbil al-Wadi'i of Dammaj (d. 1422/2001)," *Jemen Report* 2 (October 2002); cf. Francois Burgat and Muhammad Sbitli, "Les Salafis au Yemen ou ... La Modernisation Malgré Tout," *Chroniques Yemenites* (2002). According to Burgat and Sbitli, Muqbil had been arrested for the first time in 1975, long before the Juhayman-led seizure on the grand mosque. In 1976 he was detained for the second time and only released in 1978 because of the intervention of Bin Baz. He himself claimed that he was the victim of manipulation by Juhayman followers.

before his departure to Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, he survived the opposition of his detractors thanks to the support of his fellow tribesmen, the Wadi'i, who provided protection for the continuation of his *da'wa* activities. He even succeeded in developing his learning center to the extent that it has emerged as one of the most important learning sites for Salafis from all over the world. Tens of thousands of students have studied with him, a significant number of whom have come from such diverse destinations as Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Indonesia, as well as Belgium, the United States, and the United Kingdom.⁵⁶

Al-Wadi'i's relations with Saudi Arabia seem to have been complicated but dynamic. Saudi prison in 1979 was certainly a nightmare that must have left ineradicable memories in the prisoner. It is said that al-Wadi'i often launched harsh criticism of the Saudi royal family and once even declared this regime to be trapped in infidelity. Despite such hindrances, widespread official interest in spreading Wahhabism brought him close to the religious elite of Saudi Arabia. The Holy Mosque Establishment, a charitable organization sponsored by the Saudi Arabian government, has officially supported all institutions of learning associated with him, including the al-Khayr mosque and Islamic teaching centers scattered in Dammaj, Ma'abir, Ma'rib, and al-Hudaida.⁵⁷ After al-Wadi'i's death, these centers fragmented. Conflict around the rights to inherit control over them flared up among al-Wadi'i's main disciples, particularly between Abu 'Abd al-Rahman bin 'Ali al-Hujuri and Abu Hasan 'Ali 'Abd al-Hamid, who are attached to the Islamic teaching centers in Dammaj and Ma'rib, respectively.⁵⁸

In many cases, al-Wadi'i adopted a position that favored—and still favors—Saudi Arabia. He was persistent, for instance, in his criticism of the Iranian Revolution, about which he wrote a book entitled *al-Ilhad al-Khomeini fi Ard al-Haramayn* (Impudence of Khomeini on the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries). Similarly, during the civil war in 1994, he encouraged his followers to be active on the battlefronts against the Marxist-Leninist powers. This engagement made his name famous on the Yemeni political scene. Even when the battle was over, his presence remained strong. He was involved in cooperation with the Al-Islah party, which took upon itself a mission to break the remaining powers of the Marxist regime in former South Yemen.⁵⁹ It must be noted that the party was extremely active in providing shelter and succour to Afghan war veterans.⁶⁰

Al-Wadi'i also reinforced his relationship with Saudi Arabia by giving support to Bin Baz and defending him from the attacks of Bin Surur and like-minded people who condemned his fatwa legitimizing the arrival of American troops in the Kingdom. He even inveighed against Bin Surur, whom he accused of committing

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 8,4 (December 2001): 32.

⁵⁸ For a detailed discussion on this fragmentation, see Burgat and Sbitli, "Les Salafis au Yemen ou...", pp. 21-22.

⁵⁹ Concerning the linkage between the Yemeni Salafi and al-Islah, see Eric Watkins, "Islamism and Tribalism in Yemen," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 215-25. See also Paul Dresch and Bernard Haykel, "Stereotypes and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen," *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995): 405-31.

⁶⁰ See James Bruce, "The Azzam Brigades: Arab Veterans of the Afghan War," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 7,4 (April 1995): 178-80.

takfir. This effort allied him with the defenders of Bin Baz, including al-Albani, Rabi` ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, and Zayd Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. These men are important Saudi Salafi authorities outside the Hai`at Kibar al-`Ulama circle, with whom Thalib had also established connections. Every time he visited Mecca and Medina, particularly during the *haji* season, Thalib attended *halqas* held by these `ulama.

Born in Albania, al-Albani studied and lived in Damascus for a long time. During a brutal campaign pursued by the Asad regime in Syria to crush Islamist movements, he moved to Jordan, where he became the most important proselytizer among the Salafis. At the beginning of the 1990s, in the upsurge of Islamist activism resulting from the Gulf War, he was banned from delivering sermons and preaching by the Jordanian authorities.⁶¹ Finally, he moved to Saudi Arabia and established his position there as one of the most renowned Salafi authorities, known for his expertise in the Prophetic Tradition. He has written some works on the validity of *Hadiths*, including *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahiha* (The Valid Chains of the Authority of the Prophetic Traditions). In his efforts to defend Bin Baz, he has also written a number of articles published in *al-Muslimun*, the Saudi Arabia-based Salafi journal.⁶²

To serve the same purpose, Rabi` al-Madkhali has written various books, such as *Jama'a Wahida La Jama'a wa Sirat Wahida La `Ash'ara* (One Community, Not Communities, One Way, Not Ten) and *Al-Nasr al-`Aziz `ala al-Radd al-Wajiz* (The Mighty Victory on The Concise Refusal). In these two books, he launches criticisms and condemnations of Bin Surur and like-minded people. More importantly, he has written *Al-`Awasil Ma fi Kutub Sayyid Quthb* (Deviations in Sayyid Quthb's Books), criticizing the books of Quthb, which were used by Saudi Arabian detractors as important references. He claims many of Quthb's thoughts contradict the true path of Islam. Al-Madkhali is a lecturer of *Hadith* at Medina Islamic University and was reportedly engaged in the Afghan War.

Zayd Muhammad al-Madkhali is another staunch defender of Saudi Arabia and its religious establishment. He also works as a lecturer at the Medina Islamic University. He has written several books, such as *Al-Bahth al-Wajiz fi Nusrat al-Haqq al-`Aziz* (A Concise Analysis in Supporting the Mighty Truth) and *Al-Irhab wa `Atharuhu `ala al-Afrad wa'l-Umam* (Terrorism and Its Influences on Individuals and Nations). In the first book he records the post-Gulf War discourses that developed among Salafis and presents Bin Baz's answers to the criticisms addressed to him. In the second book, he discredits Bin Baz's detractors and labels them extremists and terrorists dangerous to Islam.⁶³

Thalib's decision to study with al-Wadi'i to some extent revitalized the classical linkage between Indonesia and Yemen. This decision brought him to a country that has long been a source of inspiration for the Indonesian Hadramis. As a diasporic

⁶¹ Wiktorowicz points out the role played by al-Albani in the proliferation of the Salafi movement in Jordan. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 222.

⁶² A dozen books by al-Albani have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, including his fatwa compilation, *Fatawa al-Shaikh al-Albani wa Muqarranatuha bi Fatawa al-`Ulama*. The Indonesian edition of this book appears with the title *Fatwa-Fatwa Syaikh Albani* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2003).

⁶³ This book has been translated into Indonesian under the title *Terorisme dalam Tinjauan Islam* (Tegal: Maktabah Salafy Press, 2002) and appeared together with the translation of Rabi` ibn Hadi al-Madkhali's book, *Kekeliruan Pemikiran Sayyid Quthb* (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 2002).

community, the Hadramis consistently retain some cultural attachment with their country of origin. This kind of attachment is always crucial for diasporic communities, and much of their strength derives from the identity they bring from their native countries. In his recent provocative contribution, Engseng Ho describes the Hadrami diaspora across the Indian Ocean as a virtual empire, which over the past half-millennium has exerted its political influence in diverse areas around the ocean through mobile religious, commercial, and cultural contacts with natives. Through these contacts, the Hadramis themselves became natives and, at the same time, leaders who had "control" over communication and trade. Engseng Ho argues that the triumph of this diasporic empire confronted a serious challenge when European colonial powers came to the region and tried to impose their political monopolies, using violence when they thought it necessary. The Hadramis reacted to this challenge by calling for jihad and, as a result, resistance against the European colonization erupted in many places under the leadership of the Hadrami diaspora or their scholarly associates.⁶⁴

Perhaps more importantly, Thalib's decision to study with al-Wadi'i enabled him to establish a special network of religious authority between the Indonesian and Yemeni Salafis. His primary success was to initiate the cooperation that facilitated the dispatch of hundreds of Indonesian youths to study at the Islamic teaching centers associated with al-Wadi'i. In so doing, Thalib created an alternative channel for Indonesian Salafis who wished to enrich their religious insights abroad. This cooperation produced new religious authorities who would play an important role in supporting Thalib's efforts to disseminate Salafi messages.

One may question why Thalib did not choose to go to Southern Yemen, where the ancestors of the majority of Indonesian Hadramis originated. His decision apparently had to do with the changes taking place in the religious map of the Muslim world as a consequence of the Saudi Arabian campaign for the Wahhabization of the *umma*. Because of this campaign, new centers of Islamic reform with special linkages to Saudi Arabia have sprung up internationally. Notably, a number of such institutions cropped up in Northern Yemen, particularly in the area around Dammaj, which emerged as one of the major sites for Salafi teaching centers, with Al-Wadi'i as their central figure. To establish contact with Northern Yemen, therefore, means to create a strategic linkage with Saudi Arabia.

THE SURURIYYA ISSUE

Upon his return home from Yemen, Thalib chose to live in Yogyakarta, complying with Abu Nida's request that he work to strengthen the influence of the movement that he had developed there. As we have seen in the previous chapter, both these men occupied themselves giving lectures, preaching, and delivering sermons in Salafi *halqas* and *dauras* organized under the auspices of the As-Sunnah foundation. Distinguished by his wide knowledge of Wahhabi teachings, bolstered by his pronounced oratory skills and impressive appearance—he was fluent in Arabic and at ease wearing a *jalabiyya*, turban, and long beard—Thalib quickly gained fame among the participants of the Salafi *halqas* and *dauras*. To one of his

⁶⁴ Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46,2 (April 2004): 210-46.

early followers, he perfectly represented the prototype of an authentic religious scholar:

He has distinguished tone, with the fluctuating pitch and tenor in his speech patterns, and he uses the learned classical Arabic and an excellent rhetoric. More than that, he is a descendant of *'ulama* who has studied with the most outstanding Salafi authority, al-Wadi'i, and indeed is highly fluent in religious matters."⁶⁵

Aware of his influence, Thalib tried to develop his activities even more and attracted as many students as possible into his circle. In a relatively short time, he succeeded in recruiting a loyal following, especially among university students, that gave him the confidence to claim to be the leading authority among Salafis, usurping the leadership of Abu Nida. Inevitably, tension flared between them. Abu Nida distanced himself from Thalib, withdrew from all activities related to Degolan, the center of the *As-Sunnah* foundation, and subsequently established his own teaching center, the *Majlis Ihya al-Turats al-Islami*.

As rivalries intensified, Thalib accused his competitors of being *Sururis*—that is, adherents to views put forward by Bin Surur—as described in the previous chapter. Because of his fierce criticism of Saudi Arabia's decision to invite foreign, non-Muslim troops on Saudi Arabian soil during the Gulf War in 1990, Bin Surur was condemned by prominent Salafi authorities linked to Bin Baz as a proponent of the *takfir* doctrine developed by Qutb, and was consequently expelled from Saudi Arabia. Referring to this case, Thalib warned Indonesian Salafis to be aware of the danger of the so-called *Sururiyya fitna* (libel) and remain consistent with the Salafi *da'wa*. He believed that such consistency was needed to deal with the enemies of the Salafi *da'wa*, his own rivals, whom he accused of pretending to be Salafis when they were in reality believers in *takfir*. This doctrine considers that a regime is necessarily apostate if it does not follow the *shari'a* and that violence can be used to topple such a regime and replace it with a true Islamic state. For Thalib, the spread of this doctrine is extremely dangerous, since it can inflame the revolutionary spirit among Muslims, as was demonstrated by the case of the Egyptian Tanzim al-Jihad, who was responsible for the assassination of Anwar Saddat in 1981. Thalib sought to support this claim by pointing out that the name *As-Sunnah*, the title of the periodical published by Bin Surur in London, had been adopted by Abu Nida as the name of his own publication. In addition to this, he highlighted the linkage between the *Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath* of Kuwait, the main donor contributing to Abu Nida, and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq, another principal critic of Bin Baz.⁶⁶

In 1996, the *Jam'iyya Ihya' al-Turath* had sent 'Abd al-Khaliq to visit the *Pesantren Al-Irsyad*, Tenganan. He was charged with resolving the conflicts that had disrupted the institution. In his speech, he sought to defend the Muslim Brotherhood and its ideologues by exposing the fallibility of their detractors. In reply, Shaleh Suaidi, one of the most important of Abu Nida's cadres, posed a question about the *hukm* (ruling) that cautions those who would criticize well-known Salafi authorities

⁶⁵ Interview with Abu Isa, one of Ja'far's followers of who had the opportunity to study in Yemen, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁶⁶ Interviews with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002, and with Muhammad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, December 2002.

and their followers in a rigid, uncompromising manner to be more temperate. `Abd al-Khaliq said he regretted the existence of such people and asked them to repent immediately.⁶⁷ This event enraged Thalib. He felt that Suaidi's question was intentionally directed at him, and was part of a plot to discredit him in front of `Abd al-Khaliq. Following this event, he grew more persistent in attacking Abu Nida and other Salafi proponents, and he set Baisa, who had served as the host for the meeting, clearly in his sights. He could no longer hide his anger and frustration with Baisa, whom he remembered as the traitor who had replaced him in his position as the director of the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengeran in 1990. Without any hesitation, he condemned Baisa as one of the most dangerous Sururis in Indonesia.

Thalib's persistence in launching criticisms and condemnations of Baisa drew a nettled reaction from Muhammad Sharif Fu'ad Haza, an Egyptian on the teaching staff at the Pesantren Al-Irsyad Tengeran, sent there by the Jam'iyyat Ihya' al-Turath of Kuwait. In a pamphlet, he challenged Thalib to stage a *mubahala*, a term derived from its Arabic root *bahla*, which literally means "cursing each other." A *mubahala* is a sort of prayer challenge in which the disagreeing parties meet and appeal God to render a verdict by placing his curse on the liars among the participants. To Haza, this was the only solution open to him to curb Thalib's maneuver, which had created such a deep split among Indonesian Salafis. A heated debate ensued among Salafis, news of which reached Indonesian students at Medina Islamic University, particularly Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengeran graduates who still maintained contact with their former teachers. Both Thalib and Baisa felt that the students' position on this issue was highly important. Student allies could be used to mobilize support from some Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia. Baisa sent them a letter explaining his opinions of Thalib's maneuver.⁶⁸

In reaction to this letter, the students split into two opposing groups. Some supported Baisa, others sided with Thalib. Under the leadership of Usamah Faisal Mahri, Abu Munzir Zul Akmal, Ainur Rafiq, and Agus Rudianto, the pro-Thalib group approached mentors at Medina Islamic University, like Zayd Muhammad al-Madkhali, Rabi' al-Madkhali, and `Abd al-Razzaq ibn `Abd al-Muhsin al-`Abbad, known for their resolute opposition to Bin Surur. The result of their discussions appeared in the form of a small book entitled *Nasehat dan Peringatan Atas Syarif Fuadz Hazaa'* (Advice and Warning about Sharif Fu'ad Haza).⁶⁹ In his pro-Thalib response, Zayd Muhammad al-Madkhali asserted that *mubahala* was the *da'wa* method used by the *Haddadiyin* (followers of Mahmud al-Haddad al-Misri, a Muslim Brotherhood activist advocating the use of the *takfir* doctrine) and was unacceptable. Adopting the same tone, Rabi' al-Madkhali clarified that such a method was incorrect and warned "Indonesian Salafis to be aware of the danger posed by people like Muhammad Sharif Fu'ad Haza." `Abd al-Muhsin al-`Abbad was of the opinion that recourse to "*mubahala* is forbidden unless a person has been utterly persistent in his deviations and that it is the last alternative."⁷⁰

The commotion did not stop there. The *Sururiyya* issue launched by Thalib generated tension and conflict between the Salafis and the activists of other Islamist

⁶⁷ Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, February 2003.

⁶⁸ Interview with Azhar Cholid Sef, Jakarta, January 2003.

⁶⁹ Usamah Mahri et al., *Nasehat dan Peringatan [Atas Syarif Fuadz Hazaa']* (Malang: Yayasan Waladun Shaleh, 1996).

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 1-10.

movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb al-Tahrir, and the NII movement. Considering themselves as Salafis in terms of doctrine, the proponents of these movements could not accept Thalib's condemnation of Qutb and his claim that the movements they followed fell ignominiously into the *hizbiyya* (sectarian-political) realm. To them, there were no grounds for Thalib and like-minded people—who considered *da`wa* as the only acceptable form of politics—to denounce the *hizbiyya* as a form of *bid`a* (unwholesome innovations) and *shirk* (polytheism) which would mean it is in opposition to Islam. Clashes occurred when Muslim Brotherhood activists refused to allow Thalib's followers to conduct their activities in several Indonesian mosques, such as Mardiyah Mosque, near the Medical Faculty of Gadjah Mada University. In response, Thalib's followers adopted a far more aggressive stance and sought to take over control of the mosque. They even broadened this effort by trying to replace the Muslim Brotherhood leadership in the Shalahuddin Community of the Gadjah Mada University.⁷¹

Since then, clear-cut distinctions have been drawn between the Salafi, Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb al-Tahrir, and the NII movements. University students engaged in Islamic activism began to recognize the differences between the *halqa* of the Muslim Brotherhood, the *daura* of the Hizb al-Tahrir, the *halqa* of the NII, and the *daura* of the Salafi, which had previously been confused as simply *halqa tarbiya* or *daura tarbiya*. The followers of each movement began to compete to attract new followers. As a consequence, shifts in membership from one movement to another became common. Many members of the NII movement decided to move to the Salafi movement. Strength provided by their involvement was much more significant than the defiance of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb al-Tahrir, let alone Tablighi Jama`at. These students even established a new umbrella organization called the Rabitat al-Shari`a (The Shari`a League).⁷²

What should be emphasized here is that by inflaming the *Sururiyya* issue, Thalib apparently sought to reinforce his relationships with prominent Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. This effort was particularly important to bolster his claim that he was the main authority among Indonesian Salafis, who were concerned with Saudi Arabian's campaign to expel the Salafi activists who had resisted its policy to invite the American troops. At the same time, Thalib hoped that he would gain considerable support for disseminating Salafi messages from philanthropic foundations operating in the Kingdom. People like Zayd Muhammad al-Madkhali, Rabi` al-Madkhali, and `Abd al-Muhsin al-`Abbad were indeed important figures who, because of their influence in the Salafi movement, could help channel support from Saudi Arabian foundations for Salafi *da`wa* activities in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, most of Thalib's expectations did not materialize. The money from the foundations continued to flow exclusively into the accounts of those who had been accused by Thalib of being the Sururi proponents and who had direct access to important figures in the management of the foundations and their associates. His maneuver to inflame the *Sururiyya* issue backfired by denying him access to the foundations. The executives working in the foundations were apparently unhappy with the people who had sparked this inflammatory issue, whose effect appeared to have caused a serious fragmentation among Indonesian Salafis. As far as they were

⁷¹ Interview with Abu Mas`ab, December 2002.

⁷² Interview with Faqih Edi Susilo, Semarang, February 2003.

concerned, this fragmentation could become a barrier to the Salafi movement's attempts to realize its *da'wa* goals. Because of these conflicts and divisions, Thalib's relationship with al-Irsyad continued to deteriorate. The leadership of this organization preferred to support Baisa, whom they regarded as a moderate figure accepted by the executives running the foundations.

To contain the impact of this fragmentation, the foundations invited a number of leading Salafi scholars from the Middle East to give lectures in Salafi teaching centers in Indonesia. Almost every year since 1997, the Indonesian Salafis have hosted such scholars from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan, all teachers who came to emphasize the importance of Islamic unity and solidarity for the glory of Islamic *da'wa*. Within this context, Salim bin 'Id al-Hilali and 'Ali bin Hasan 'Abd al-Hamid al-Halabi, two important disciples of al-Albani, visited Surabaya to deliver a series of lectures in the al-Irsyad branch office of East Java in 2001.⁷³

THE PERIODICAL SALAFY

Thalib's determination to be the leader of the Indonesian Salafis led him to publish his own periodical, *Salafy*, the first Salafi periodical to emerge after the monthly *As-Sunnah*. Its birth can be seen as a consequence of Abu Nida's refusal to publish Thalib's article condemning Bin Surur in *As-Sunnah*. *Salafy* was launched in early 1996 and appeared to be the mouthpiece of Thalib. With the slogan "attempting to follow in the footsteps of the *Salaf al-Salih*," it quickly cut into the popularity of *As-Sunnah*, whose management had been taken over by Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin under the Solo-based Lajnat al-Istiqamah.

Initially, only about three thousand copies of each *Salafy* edition were printed, with circulation limited to no more than ten cities all over Java. Yet only one year later, its circulation had tripled and circulation now reached fifty cities throughout Indonesia.⁷⁴ It even expanded its reach into foreign countries, particularly Malaysia and Australia.⁷⁵ The journal's rapid development was partly determined by its presentation and style, as it made free use of modern design, graphic art, and popular media techniques. Thalib shrewdly recruited staff experienced in campus media.

In this periodical, Thalib had his own column, "*Nasehati*" (My Advice), in which he airs his opinions about current issues. In the first issue of the journal, for instance, he wrote about the Salafi *da'wa* movement as being poised at a crossroads because of the proliferation of groups calling themselves Salafis that, in fact, deviated from the principles of the *Salaf al-Salih*. He underscored the fact that his mission in publishing this periodical was to cleanse the Salafi *da'wa* of deviance:

The Salafi *da'wa* can be envisaged as a movement at a crossroads. What I am trying to say is that the Salafi *da'wa* is in jeopardy. It is poised to deviate from its

⁷³ The arrival of these two emissaries attracted particular attention in the Salafi media. See "Al-Nashatat al-Da'wiyya wa'l 'Ilmiyya li Markaz al-Imam al-Albani li'l Dirasat al-Manhajiyya wa'l Abhath al-'Ilmiyya," *Al-Aslaha* 37,6 (2001): 79. See also "Hadirnya Dua Tokoh Murid Syaikh Al-Albani di Surabaya," *As-Sunnah* 3,5 (2001): 38-42.

⁷⁴ Interview with Adi Abdul Mufid, managing editor of the *Salafy*, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁷⁵ See the list of the *Salafy* sales agents available in different issues of the monthly *Salafy*.

original goal ... Muslims are indeed constantly confronted by highly dangerous crossroads. The effort to consistently walk on the straight path is challenged by a variety of temptations.⁷⁶

Thalib has also contributed articles to other columns in the journal, such as "*Ahkam*" (Islamic Law), "*Mabhath*" (Analysis), "*Aqida*" (Islamic Creed), "*Tafsir*" (Quranic Exegesis), "*Hadith*" (Prophetic Traditions), and "*Sira*" (Islamic history). These columns constitute the main content that appears in every edition, and they were the vehicle through which Wahhabite doctrines were introduced. Germane to the Salafi concern with gender issues are pages specifically devoted to women. An emphasis on the responsibility of women is continually hammered home, compounded by a warning of the danger of female deviations from the path of the *Salaf al-Salih*.

The publication of *Salafy* contributed a great deal to the proliferation of the *Sururiyya* issue. Through it, Thalib published a dozen articles attacking Bin Surur, accusing him of being the mastermind behind the turmoil occurring in various parts of the Muslim world. From Thalib's perspective, Surur was a collaborator with the Western forces trying to undermine Islam; in support of this accusation, Thalib cited Surur's residence in Birmingham, England, which he believed to be the nest of the Western plot to destroy Islam.⁷⁷ In the context of his attacks on Bin Surur, he criticized a number of Islamist leaders both at home and abroad, including Shukri Mustafa and `Umar `Abd al-Rahman, the leaders of the Jama`at al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra and the Jama`at al-Islamiyya of Egypt, respectively; Taqiy al-Din al-Nabhani, the founder of the Hizb al-Tahrir; plus Bin Laden, Abdullah Sungkar, and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir.⁷⁸

Thalib also published articles containing sharp criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood and related personalities. As said before, he accused this organization of demonstrating a *hizbiyya* tendency, which aimed at fueling an Islamic revolution in the Muslim world. The most significant ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Qutb, became the main target of Thalib's criticisms. From Thalib's point of view, Qutb had introduced the *takfir* doctrine in relation to a ruler, and this act had inspired various uprisings in the name of Islam. Thalib likewise did not hesitate to condemn al-Banna, Sayyid Hawwa, and Muhammad Qutb. As far as he is concerned, the principles taught by these ideologues have trapped the Salafi *da`wa* movement into tendencies that smack of *bid'a*.⁷⁹

There is little doubt that the monthly *Salafy* quickly reinforced Thalib's image as a leading Salafi authority in Indonesia. The periodical's distribution expanded very quickly and helped spread his influence among Salafis and activists of other Islamic movements. As a result, he came to receive more invitations to give lectures and sermons in cities where many Salafis lived. A sense of group solidarity, with Thalib as its central figure, quickly formed as the foundation for a solid, informal social network. This periodical also created a stronger sense of "imagined community" bound by a shared religious discourse that transcended boundaries and linked many Salafis through Thalib.

⁷⁶ Ja`far Umar Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan," *Salafy* 1 (1995): 42.

⁷⁷ See Ja`far Umar Thalib, "Fitnah Sururiyah Memecah-belah Umat," *Salafy* 2 (1996): 15-18.

⁷⁸ Ja`far Umar Thalib, "Memahami Hukum Jama`ah, Imamah dan Bai'ah," *Salafy* 12 (1996): 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.



Figure II: *Salafy*, the mouthpiece of Ja'far Umar Thalib in spreading the Salafi message;
Figure III: *As-Sunnah*, the first Salafi journal in Indonesia.

In his influential work, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson notes the transformative value of writing and publishing in fostering a sense of simultaneity and promoting symmetrical patterns of participation and identification and, ultimately, nationhood:

... the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. The potential stretch of these communities was inherently limited, and, at the same time, bore none but the most fortuitous relationship to existing political boundaries ...⁸⁰

Elaborating on this view, Dale Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson argue that the use of print media in the Islamic world has created a new religious public sphere that increasingly shapes contests over the authoritative use of the symbolic language of Islam. Religious messages are no longer exclusively broadcast by religious authorities in the form of religious decrees (fatwas) or published booklets. New thinkers from diverse backgrounds can also take part in the exchange, bringing with them their own discourses. The new mode of communication has made these contests increasingly global, so that even local disputes take on a transnational dimension. At the same time, this phenomenon has changed the balance of

⁸⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 46.

circulation of new ideas, the sum of Islamic discourse, and the transposition of religious issues.⁸¹

THE IHYAUS SUNNAH NETWORK

The popularity of the periodical *Salafy* was complemented by the establishment of a *pesantren*-based network. This network was centered in the Ihyaus Sunnah, the *pesantren* established by Thalib and some other Salafi proponents in 1994 at Degolan Kaliurang, around sixteen kilometers to the north of Yogyakarta, as mentioned in the previous chapter. When I visited this *pesantren* for the first time in 2000, it appeared to be unadorned and poor. It was built on no more than three hundred square meters rented for a period of ten years and centered around a modest mosque initially named Jamil al-Rahman but later changed to 'Uthman Bin 'Affan. Approximately a hundred meters from this mosque there were two cramped dormitories, each about a hundred meters square, with walls made of bamboo and dirt floors covered with mats and plastic. The *pesantren* had some seventy students whose ages ranged from seven to seventeen years old. They were taught by four *ustadhs* (religious teachers) renting modest houses in the surrounding area. Some of them were "day" students who had lodgings in nearby villages. The students were divided into three groups according to age. To run this *pesantren*, Thalib recruited Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, a LIPIA graduate who had completed his studies in an Islamic teaching center in Saudi Arabia associated with al-'Uthaymin.

The Ihyaus Sunnah emerged as the pioneer institution of a dozen other Salafi *pesantrens* which were established in the period between 1995 and 2000 in various regions in Indonesia, including Solo, Magelang, Semarang, Cirebon, Bandung, Makassar, Sukoharjo, Magetan, Jember, Ngawi, Gresik, Cilacap, Pekanbaru, Yogyakarta, and Balikpapan.⁸² These *pesantrens* had a special connection with the Ihya al-Sunnah. In fact, they were generally established and run by Ihyaus Sunnah graduates who were sent by Thalib to study with al-Wadi'i in Yemen. Among them were Abdurrahman Lombok, Muhammad Sarbini, Abdurrahman Wonosari, Idral Haris, Abu Qatadah, Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain, Lukman Baabduh, Qomar Suaidi, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Mu'thi al-Medani, Abdus Somad, Abu Hamzah Yusuf Abu Karimah Asykari, Abu Ubaidah Syafruddin, Assasuddin, Azhari Asri, Bukhari, Fauzan, Muslim Abu Ishaq, Usamah Faisal Mahri, and Zul Akmal.

Like the Ihyaus Sunnah, these other *pesantrens* were generally poor, as I observed in 2003. The Minhajus Sunnah, located in Magelang, for instance, had 120 students aged seven to seventeen. They occupied an extremely limited space in a modest mosque built on rice-farming land. All teaching activities took place in the mosque.

⁸¹ Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson, "Redefining Muslim Publics," in *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 14.

⁸² These *pesantrens* have names associated with the slogans or doctrines popular among the Salafis, such as Minhajus Sunnah (the Method of the Prophetic Tradition), Lu'lu wal Marjan (Pearls and the Coral), Diyaus Sunnah (the Light of the Prophetic Tradition), Ihyaus Sunnah (the Revival of the Prophetic Tradition), As-Sunnah (the Prophetic Tradition), Al-Atsariyah (the Vestige [of the Prophet]), Ittibaus Sunnah (Following the Prophetic Tradition), Al-Salafy (the Follower of the Worthy Ancestors), Ta'zhimus Sunnah (Glorification of the Prophetic Tradition), Al-Bayyinah (the Indisputable Evidence), Al-Furqan (the Evidence), Al-Ansar (the Friends [of Muhammad]), and Difa'u 'Anis Sunnah (Defending the Prophetic Tradition).

Approximately a hundred meters from the mosque, there were a few teachers' houses and a small office. What is intriguing is that this *pesantren* encompasses a radio station that regularly broadcasts religious sermons of *pesantren ustadhs* for a few hours in the afternoon. The same conditions were apparent in the al-Madinah, located in a village in Boyolali, around twenty kilometers from Solo. Although this *pesantren* had more than a hundred students, its facilities were extremely limited. A small mosque served as the center of its activities, as well as the dormitory for a dozen of its students, who were not accommodated in the small, unfinished dormitory located near the mosque. The conditions of the As-Sunnah, located at Baji Rupa, Makassar, an institution that functions under the umbrella of the Markaz Nasyad al-Islami Foundation, were much worse. When I visited, a modest mosque there functioned as the center of all activities, with three small wooden houses provided as student dormitories. This *pesantren* had almost fifty students, including those from the surrounding villages. They were taught by four teachers. And yet this modest *pesantren* had published three editions of a periodical named *An-Nashihah* under the slogan "Illuminating the Darkness."

The systems of instruction and curricula in these *pesantrens* are conservative in nature, indicating that the authorities repudiate doctrines and activities regarded as corrupted by the influence of Western culture and challenge the traditional corpus of religious authority altogether. Every morning at around eight o'clock, *ustadhs* come to the mosque and take different positions. The most senior *ustadh* usually takes a position in the center of the mosque and the other *ustadhs* in its wings. Students sit around them and look at the Arabic books in their hands while listening to their *ustadhs*. The *ustadhs* read the books and explain the meaning of every sentence while giving illustrations and examples. Sometimes they use small blackboards to make their explanations clearer. Some students make notes on their books, while others only listen.⁸³ When being taught Arabic, the students are drilled repeatedly so that they can learn to imitate as fluently as possible the examples of the sentence given by their *ustadhs*. Students have opportunities to pose questions after the *ustadhs* finish their lessons. This activity lasts until the noon prayer. Between the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer, students have lunch and rest. Following the afternoon prayer, they come back to undertake the same activity. This afternoon activity ends around one hour before the sunset prayer at six o'clock. Between the sunset prayer and the evening prayer, at 7:00 pm, the students read and memorize parts of the Qur'an assigned by their *ustadhs*.

Islamic Theology (*Aqida*), or, more precisely, Wahhabi doctrine, is the main subject studied in the *pesantrens*. Students read such works as *Al-Qaul al-Mufid fi 'Adilat al-Tawhid* (the Useful Opinion on the Evidence of the Oneness of God), which is the summary of the *Kitab al-Tawhid* (the Book on the Oneness of God) written by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. In some *pesantrens*, students are obliged to memorize it by heart as a prerequisite before continuing to study other books. Having completed this book, they are usually obliged to study the *Kitab al-Tawhid* or its annotated commentaries, such as *Al Qaul al-Shadid 'Ala Kitab al-Tawhid* (the Authoritative Opinion on Book of the Oneness of God) by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Su'udi. Subsequently, they study *Al-Usul al-Thalatha* (the Three Principles) by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab before reading *Al-'Aqida al-Wasitiyya* (the Middle Faith) by Ibn Taymiyya or its annotated commentary, *Sharh al-'Aqida al-Wasitiyya*

⁸³ This method resembles the *bandongan* system popular in the traditional *pesantren*.

(Explanation on the Middle Faith) by Salih ibn Fauzan `Ali Fauzan. Having mastered these primary books, students are encouraged to read other books, including *Nubdha fi al-`Aqida* (Fragmentation in the Faith) by al-`Uthaymin, and *Minhaj al-Firqa al-Najiya* (Method of the Saved Sect) by Muhammad bin Jamil Zainu.

As all these books are in Arabic, students are first required to study Arabic. Various aspects are taught separately, including *Nahw* (Basic Grammar), *Sarf* (Morphology), *Mutala`a* (Reading), *Imla* (Writing), *Muhadatha* (Conversation), and *Balagha* (Rhetoric). For this last subject, they use books that are popular in the traditional *pesantrens*, including, *Al-Nahw al-Wadih* (Distinct Basic Grammar), *Al-Amthila al-Tasrifyya* (Arabic Morphological Examples), *Qawa'id al-Sarf* (Principles of the Morphology), and *al-Balagha al-Wadiha* (Distinct Rhetoric). In addition to these, they make use of *Al-`Arabiyya li'l-Nashi'in* (Arabic for Beginners), a new comprehensive book of Arabic distributed free of charge to various Islamic educational institutions by Saudi Arabian embassies.

The understanding of the Wahhabi doctrine provides the foundation for the students to study other subjects, including Quranic Exegesis, the Prophetic Traditions, Islamic Legal Theory, Islamic Jurisprudence, and *Da'wa* Method. For Quranic Exegesis, they read, among other things, *Usul al-Tafsir* (Principles of the Qur'anic Exegesis) by al-`Uthaymin and *Aysir al-Tafasir li Kalam al-`Ali al-Kabir* (the Simplest Exegesis on the Words of the Eminent Supreme) by Abu Bakr Jabir al-Jaza'iri. For the Prophetic Traditions, they study *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* (al-Nawawi's Forty Prophetic Tradition Collection) by Imam al-Nawawi or its commentary, *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* by Salih al-Shaykh, as well as *Mudhakkarat al-Hadith al-Nabawi* (Treatise on the Prophetic Traditions) by Rabi' al-Madkhali, and *Darurat al-Ihtimam bi Sunan al-Nabawiyya* (Solicitude for the Prophetic Traditions) by `Abd al-Salam Abi Barjis Ibn Nasir `Abd al-Karim. For Islamic Legal Theory, the required reading materials include *Usul al-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Al-Usul min `Ilm al-Usul* (the Principles of the Science of the Principles [of Islamic Jurisprudence]) by al-`Uthaymin and *Al-Waraqat fi Usul al-Fiqh* (Treatise on the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence) by `Abd al-Malik ibn Juwaini. This subject is taught to support another related subject, Islamic Jurisprudence, in which *Taysir al-Fiqh* (the Simple Version of Islamic Jurisprudence) by Salih bin Ghanim al-Sadlan, *Minhaj al-Muslim* (Method of the Believer) by Abu Bakr Jabir al-Jaza'iri, and *al-Mulakhkhas al-Fiqhiy* (Summary of the Islamic Jurisprudence) by Salih bin Fauzan al-Fauzan are the main required readings. For the Method of *Da'wa* course, the students read *Da'wa al-Du`at* (Islamic Propagation Guidelines for Muslim Preachers) by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and *Al-Da'watu ila Allah* (Islamic Mission in the Name of God) by `Ali Hasan al-Halabi al-Athari.

Some of the *pesantrens* offer special programs for university students. Called *Tadrib al-Du`at* (Training for Preachers) and *Tarbiyat al-Nisa* (Education for Women), these programs last from three months to one year. The *Tadrib al-Du`at* is designed to produce preachers ready to conduct *da'wa* activities. The subjects taught consist of Islamic Theology, Quranic Exegesis, Prophet's Traditions, Islamic History, Islamic Law, Ethics, and Arabic. The *Tarbiyat al-Nisa* is addressed to women and aimed at forming their personalities to suit Wahhabite doctrines. In this program, its participants study Islamic Theology and Islamic Jurisprudence, besides imbibing a number of instructions on behavior, fashion, gender relations, and methods for taking care of husbands and children. The materials used are selected from the books required in the aforementioned regular programs.

What seems particularly intriguing is that poor, straitened conditions of the sort described above are not found in several Salafi *pesantrens* associated with the rivals of Thalib, including the Pesantren Bin Baz led by Abu Nida and the Pesantren Imam al-Bukhari led by Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin. When I observed it at the end of 2002, the Pesantren Bin Baz looked prosperous and relatively large, with a number of permanent buildings consisting of study rooms, *musalla* (small places in which to pray), an office, dormitories, and teachers' houses. As demonstrated by the inscriptions on their walls, these buildings exist thanks to donations given by Middle Eastern personalities, particularly Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti donors. This *pesantren* is built on one hectare in Piyungan, Bantul, around twenty-five kilometers to the south of Yogyakarta, on land which was donated by Sultan Hamengkubowono of the Yogyakarta Court. In this *pesantren* there are nine teachers responsible for around three hundred (male and female) students divided into three levels: kindergarten, primary, and secondary. The majority of them board in a dormitory where males and females are strictly separated. To convey its Salafi messages to a broader audience, this *pesantren* has published the monthly *Fatawa*.

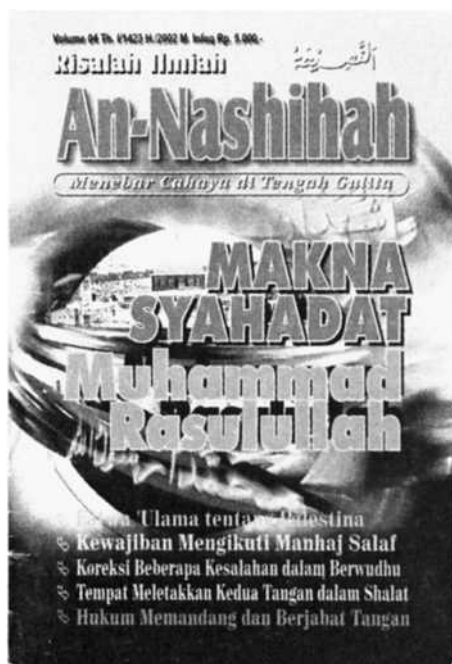


Figure IV: *An-Nashihah*, the journal published by the Salafi *pesantren* As-Sunnah in Makassar;



Figure V: *Fatawa*, the journal published by Abu Nida-run Bin Baz *pesantren* in Yogyakarta.

The Pesantren Imam al-Bukhari shares many similarities with the Bin Baz. This *pesantren* has developed very quickly and appears in better condition and larger than the Bin Baz. It is built on a roughly two-hectare area with a dozen permanent buildings consisting of study rooms, an office, a library, a dormitory, teachers' houses, and a two-story mosque. As in the Bin Baz, every building unit bears an inscription on its wall naming the main donor who financed its construction. These

donors are also from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This *pesantren* is located in Selokaton, Surakarta, fifty kilometers to the east of Solo, on the main road from Solo to Purwodadi. It enrolls four hundred students, who study at three different levels: kindergarten, primary, and secondary. The number of male students is four times larger than that of female students. All of them board in the dormitory that also maintains a partition between males and females. They are taught by nineteen teachers, all of whom live in the teachers' houses provided by the *pesantren*.

Clearly international support from wealthy donors has benefited these schools, and yet it is important to recognize that the comparatively austere conditions in the *pesantrens* associated with the Ihyaus Sunnah do not seem to have weakened those enterprises. In fact, these modest conditions have seemingly strengthened the informal social network connecting the Ihyaus Sunnah *ustadhs* with one another. This relationship is not simply a nexus that links network clusters together but also an engine for network expansion. All the *ustadhs* I encountered were active in organizing their own activities independently.⁸⁴ There was no formal organization available to effect movement mobilization, which meant that no strict hierarchy governed the relationships between the center and its "branches," between the leaders and common followers. Only on certain occasions did the teachers mobilize their students and surrounding people to gather in one city to conduct *tabligh akbar*, in which Thalib had the opportunity to stir the emotions of his followers. There is no doubt, however, that in a certain context this passive network can be activated for collective action through the art of mobilization.

⁸⁴ See also a discussion of the development of the Salafi movement in Jordan as discussed by Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement in Jordan," pp. 219-40.

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CHAPTER THREE

TOWARD POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

The rise of Laskar Jihad has introduced a rupture in the history of the Salafi movement in Indonesia. The movement that hitherto remained relatively consistent in developing a stance of apolitical quietism began to engage in *realpolitik* shortly after the collapse of the New Order regime in May 1998. Amid the fast current of political change that began to gain momentum at that time, the proponents of the movement lost no time in responding to a variety of current political issues. They organized gatherings in which they expressed their profound concern about the direction of the ongoing reformation process. In a gathering held in Yogyakarta in mid-1998, for instance, they voiced explicit regrets about the current of reformation, which, from their point of view, had resulted in the collapse of Indonesia's socio-political system and disrupted the growing alliance with Islamic forces so recently encouraged by the state.¹ Through similar gatherings organized afterwards, their engagement in the political discourse of the state became increasingly visible.

The enormous momentum of the Salafis' movement was demonstrated when their members flooded the Kridosono Sport Stadium in Yogyakarta at the beginning of January 2000. While waving banners and shouting slogans voicing their concern about the communal conflicts in the Moluccas and other trouble spots in Indonesia, they proclaimed a resolution, called "*Resolusi Jihad*" (Jihad Resolution), demanding all elements of Indonesian Muslim society be prepared for a jihad against the enemies of Islam. Proponents claimed that the necessity to wage this war arose when the so-called "three pillars of the state," namely Muslims, the armed forces, and the president, had been toppled in the face of ethnic and inter-religious violence provoked by foreign powers. They then announced the establishment of FKAWJ (Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet), which was intended to serve as an umbrella organization for Laskar Jihad, which was constituted of volunteer fighting units.

The dramatic shift of the Salafi movement towards political activism and militancy was inseparable from the political ambitions of the movement's leaders, who saw that the rapid changes in the Indonesian political landscape would facilitate the orchestration of popular politics and the staging of collective actions. Exploiting religious symbols and sentiments, they mobilized a large section of the Salafi membership and other aspirant *mujahidin* to support calls for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots. The task of this chapter is to examine the dynamics around this process of mobilization: What factors stimulated and enabled this process to occur? How did the Salafis mobilize? And to what extent did the movement's network play a role in the process of mobilization? It is necessary to answer these questions in order to explore the conditions and processes that eventually led to the

¹ Concerning this gathering see Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah Merupakan Perjuangan Reformasi Rakyat," *Salafy* 28 (1998): 10-15.

formation of Laskar Jihad. Before turning to these issues, however, let us first briefly review discussions of social movement theories.

Social movement theorists have long been debating the issue of mobilization. Typically, mobilization is accompanied by the irruption of ordinary people in the streets in attempts to try to exert power against elites, authorities, and opponents—what is commonly referred to as “contentious politics.”² The roots of the debate can be traced to the 1960s, when interests in the study of collective actions and protests increased significantly as a response to the growth of social movements. Unsatisfied by the old-fashioned structural-functionalist model predominantly concerned with the issue of grievances, contemporary scholars like Mancur Olson, Mayer Zald, and Anthony Oberschall proposed “resource mobilization theory.” In contrast to the former, which regarded contentious politics as the expression of the mentality of the crowd, of anomie and deprivation, this theory defined collective movements as rational, purposeful, and organized actions.³ According to this perspective, protest actions derive from the way in which social movements are able to organize discontent, reduce the costs of action, utilize and create solidarity networks, share incentives among members, and achieve internal consensus.⁴

In one of his important works, Sidney Tarrow emphasizes the dimension of contentious politics as the strategy developed by the powerless to challenge elites, government authorities, or powerful opponents. He argues that a collective action becomes contentious precisely “when it is used by people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.”⁵ From his point of view, contentious politics can be defined more as a collective challenge based on common purposes and social solidarities, rather than as an expression of extremism, violence, and deprivation. Within this working definition, the importance of the rational and strategic components of social movements, as underscored by resource mobilization theory, is emphasized.⁶

By proposing the rational, purposeful model, the social movement theorists sought to fill the lacunae in the structural-functionalist theory, which tends to neglect a study of movement commonalities rooted in process, that is, how a social movement emerges and what conditions enable discontent to be transformed into mobilization. Herein lies the significance of the theory for our discussion about the dynamics involved in the rise of Laskar Jihad. The theory is helpful not only to expose the factors that encouraged and facilitated the transformation of the “apolitical” *da'wa* movement of the Salafis into the militantly activist Laskar Jihad,

² On the definition of this concept see, for instance, Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1982); and Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, “To Map Contentious Politics,” *Mobilization* 1 (1996): 17-34.

³ Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-9.

⁴ For an overview of resource mobilization approach, see, for instance, Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); and Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy, eds., *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987).

⁵ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

but also to account for the process of the transformation itself. In this respect, three key concepts of social movement theory are of particular importance: "political opportunity structure," "cycles of contention," and "framing."

The concept of "political opportunity structure" suggests that the emergence of social movements is frequently triggered by significant changes taking place in a political structure. This sort of change can open up opportunities that create incentives for social actors to initiate new phases of contentious politics and encourage people to engage in them. As a result of these changes, rifts often appear within elite circles which tend to weaken the power of those elites and thereby decrease the risk facing resource-poor people who initiate collective action; these developments also encourage portions of the elite to seize the role of the protector of the people. For some elites, support from outside the polity is needed to maintain an advantage in competition with their political rivals. Because the political opportunities are external—generated by the actions of people who are not members of the movement—the longevity of social movements is largely the result of how long these opportunities are available.⁷

As they keep pace with the opening of political opportunities, social movements go through a kind of lifecycle, from gestation to formation and consolidation.⁸ A rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors occurs, accompanied by a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention and techniques of mobilization. During this process, coalitions are formed and reformed, and contingent political events have enduring consequences. This is precisely the moment when movements grow through political encounters in which contending organizations try to win the support of all available networks.⁹ This process will determine the success or failure of social movements to make influential claims by adopting a certain "repertoire of contention," the forms of collective action that sometimes involve the utilization of irreverent symbols, religious rituals, and cultural performances.¹⁰

An important condition for the success of attempts at mobilization is "framing," a process in which actors in a social movement produce, arrange, and disseminate discourse that may resonate among those they intend to mobilize.¹¹ Interpreting grievances based on a certain master frame and raising expectations of success are at the core of this process.¹² Master frames function "in a manner analogous to linguistic codes in that they provide a grammar that punctuates, and syntactically connects, patterns or happenings in the world."¹³ Framing can be conceptualized as

⁷ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁸ N. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Action* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1962).

⁹ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 142-45. See also Sidney Tarrow, "Struggles, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest," *Cornell Western Societies Paper 2* (Ithaca, NY: Center for International Studies, 1989).

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 30-2. See also Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, pp. 170-72.

¹¹ David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford, "Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986): 461-81.

¹² Bert Klandermans, "Grievance Interpretation and Success Expectations: The Social Construction of Protest," *Social Behaviour* 4 (1989): 121-22.

¹³ David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. A. D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 138.

the art of communicating messages in order to persuade audiences and elicit support and participation. Issues and symbols are selected and contextualized to achieve "frame resonance," that is, sufficient responses that will transform mobilization potential into actual mobilization. Resonant collective action frames provide the foundation whereby actors in a social movement produce their collective identity, an interactive and shared definition concerning the orientation of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place. A strong sense of collective identity determines the decision making by actors and the way they adapt their activism to changing circumstances.¹⁴

Because social movements must bring people together in the field, their success is also determined by the existence of a recruitment network. Alberto Melucci emphasizes that the recruitment network plays a fundamental role in the process of involving individuals in the movement since no process of mobilization begins in a vacuum; isolated and uprooted individuals never mobilize. The recruitment network constitutes a crucial intermediate level for understanding the process by which individuals become involved in a collective action. It is within the network that individuals interact, influence each other, negotiate, and hence establish conceptual and motivational frameworks for the action.¹⁵ This network can take the form of either a formal, hierarchical organization or an informal social network. If formal organization is generally viewed as an effective instrument for empowering politically excluded collectivities because it coordinates and focuses activities,¹⁶ an informal social network can be perceived as a crucial mechanism in providing recruitment pools operating outside the state's control.¹⁷

TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

As suggested by the concept of "opportunity structure," the role of political variables in the rise of a social movement is determinant. This holds true for the case of Laskar Jihad, whose establishment benefited enormously from the political changes taking place following the collapse of the New Order regime and the ensuing transitional processes. This is because the dramatic event stimulated the growth of a free political space, which enabled all members of Indonesian society to discuss and develop opinions on issues that affected their lives. Consequently, a variety of groups, identities, and interests emerged, competing for the newly liberated public sphere. As Robert Pinkney puts it, the collapse of an authoritarian regime is indeed frequently related to a degree of freedom of expression and association together with freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment engendered by the decrease of the state's capacity to repress dissent.¹⁸ Paradoxically,

¹⁴ Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 70-74.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflicts and Social Movements* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973).

¹⁷ Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism, Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001).

¹⁸ Robert Pinkney, *Democracy in the Third World*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), p. 156. See also Graeme Gill, *The Dynamics of Democratization: Elites, Civil Society, and the Transition Process* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 7.

this openness presents those who formerly held power with room to maneuver and orchestrate a game that might ultimately checkmate the emerging civil society; this development, in turn, would assist former elites to recover their lost power. The key to reach this end is to manipulate the public sphere, the main arena through which ideas, interests, values, and ideologies are formed and the discourses of civil society are voiced and made politically efficacious.¹⁹

It is vital to stress that the fall of an authoritarian leader does not necessarily break down the whole structure of his political power. O'Donnell and Schmitter argue that the success of opposition action in forcing an authoritarian regime to rapidly dismantle itself often still leaves power temporarily fixed in the pillars of the regime.²⁰ This observation is useful in understanding the dynamics of the collapse of the Indonesian New Order, whose formation began to take shape in 1966 when Suharto came to power and initiated a bloody campaign against communism. Built on the master-narrative that posited a latent communist threat, this regime remained in power for more than thirty-two years under the support of strong political machinery comprised of the military, Golkar, the state bureaucracy, and individuals, groups, and organizations associated with them. Because of its pervasive strength rooted in the everyday life of society, this political machinery was not necessarily shaken up by Suharto's fall. It had the potential to become one of the factors that would halt the nation's transitional progress towards democratic consolidation. It is not surprising that, as observed by Henk Schulte Nordholt, post-New Order Indonesia finds itself in a situation where "political and economic changes seem doomed in the face of bureaucratic sabotage, corrupt power politics, short-term opportunism, and the absence of a widely shared vision of the future."²¹

The complexity of the transitional process following the fall of Suharto was confirmed by the fact that, in tandem with the spread of democratic discourse, ethnic and religious violence flared up in various regions of Indonesia, threatening a society apparently imbued with a culture of tolerance based on harmonious inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations. For some scholars, this fact is inexorably associated with the strategy of manipulating primordial—religious, ethnic, and racial—sentiments, a strategy inherent in the political practice of the New Order and deliberately implemented by the regime in order to stunt the growth of civil society and thereby maintain its hegemony.²² It should be remembered, however, that although this argument seems plausible, its emphasis on the position of the state as the only actor that can direct and impose whatever agenda it has on the civil society tends to overlook the dynamics of power relations that involve other levels of society.

¹⁹ Simone Chambers, "A Critical Theory of Civil Society," in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 96.

²⁰ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, MD, and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 20-21.

²¹ Henk Schulte Nordholt, "Renegotiating Boundaries: Access, Agency, and Identity in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 159, 4 (2003): 550-89.

²² Muhammad AS Hikam, "Problems of Political Transition in Post-New Order Indonesia," *The Indonesian Quarterly* 27,1 (1999). See also John T. Sidel, "Macet Total: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order," *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998): 159-94.

As a matter of fact, in its demise the New Order still sought to expand its basis of support in the face of opposition by exploiting a variety of primordial sentiments. Through the intervention of Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's own son-in-law, who served at that time as the Commander of the Kopassus (Special Armed Force), the regime spread anti-Zionist and anti-Christian sentiments with the support of a number of hard-line Muslim organizations, including KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam, Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World), DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation), and PPMI (Persatuan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Workers). In a meeting with proponents of the organizations, Prabowo distributed a booklet explaining that the economic crisis afflicting Indonesia and the ensuing problems were the results of a conspiracy plotted by secular nationalists and extremist Jesuits with the collaboration of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), Mossad, the Vatican, and the Indonesian Chinese. This conspiracy story was concocted by the Prabowo-backed Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) led by Amir Santoso, M. Dien Syamsuddin, and M. Fadli Zon.²³

The New Order's effort to remain in power by mobilizing support from the hard-line Muslim organizations opened up the opportunity for the Salafis to engage in the political discourse of the state and begin mobilizing their own recruits. Beginning in February 1998, they organized a *tabligh akbar* in Solo, Central Java, which was attended by hundreds of Salafis from some regions in Indonesia. They listened attentively to the oration of Ja'far Umar Thalib, who called for sympathizers to follow a coordinated sequence of actions in anticipating the rapid changes that were to occur following the calamity of the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997. In response to this call, they announced the establishment of the Ikatan Taklim Salafi (Salafi Religious Teaching Association), of which Thalib was appointed leader. Doubtless, the establishment of this association led the Salafis into the first phase of their mobilization. This association emerged as the embryo of FKAWJ, which would give rise to Laskar Jihad.

In the early phases of their involvement in political games, the Salafis experienced some hesitation. They had declared that entering politics might entail a transgression against the non-political Salafi *da'wa* principle, which should consistently be followed by all Salafis across the world. Within this context, they were not sparing in their criticism of various Islamic movements that had been unable to resist this temptation; they expatiated, for example, on the catastrophe that had overcome the Salafi movement in Algeria when it seized political power. They argued that the Salafis should not make the same mistake, and for this reason any

²³ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 202-03. See also Andrée Feillard, Noorhaidi Hasan, and Rémy Madinier, "L'islam indonésien, au cœur de toutes les interrogations," *Les Musulmans d'Asie du Sud-Est Face au Vertige de la Radicalisation*, ed. Stéphane Doyet and Rémy Madinier (Paris: Les Indes Savantes & Irasec, 2003), pp. 37-68. Amir Santoso was a University of Indonesia political scientist known for his close ties to Hartono, a retired general who served as an ally of Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, Suharto's eldest daughter. Like Santoso, M. Dien Syamsuddin also has a background as a political scientist. This American university graduate has been a lecturer at the State Islamic University in Jakarta. But besides teaching, he was active in Golkar and once appointed a director general in the Ministry of Manpower. Fadli Zon is the youngest among the three. He was known as a brilliant student of the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia, who soon after finishing his course of study dedicated himself to serving Prabowo.

attempt to mobilize should be rejected.²⁴ Thalib himself insisted that the Salafi movement should be able to abide by its own principle and mission and resist succumbing to the pleas of certain groups in the society that were moving towards political activism.²⁵

This hesitation can be explained by the fact that hard-line Muslims still clearly remembered the New Order's long-term repression of political Islam. Only in the last decade of its rule did the New Order gradually seek to repair its previously antagonistic relations with Islam and move towards accommodation. As discussed in chapter one, in an attempt to contain the legitimacy crisis, Suharto introduced a strategy of conservative Islamization at the beginning of the 1990s, as marked by the establishment of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association) under the leadership of Habibie. The introduction of this strategy was enthusiastically welcomed by the nation's Islamic constituency. They saw it as a promising opportunity and believed they would be able to change the fate of their society, their nation, and their state—not to mention bringing about changes at their own private level. In this sense, this strategy appears to have succeeded in "subduing" a variety of Muslim opposition groups. Suddenly there emerged what Robert Hefner refers to as "regimist Islam," which did not recoil from being a real partner of the state.²⁶

THE OPENING OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCESS

The opportunity of the Salafis to play an active role in the political arena arose when Habibie came to power. Having been appointed president through a restless drama, Habibie, who had claimed Suharto to be his primary political mentor, immediately had to confront strong opposition from different elements in society. In response to these challenges, he tried to convince the opposition about his commitment to reform by, among other measures, restructuring and strengthening the financial system and proposing an extraordinary session of the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, People's Consultative Assembly), with the primary aim of setting a new date for general elections. These general elections would define a new composition of the MPR membership, and those new members would elect new president and vice-president.²⁷ Despite these efforts, Habibie continued to confront a wave of opposition from groups that did not support his ascendancy to power. They persistently protested against him and demanded his resignation. At one point, they threatened that if he were not prepared to step down at the MPR's extraordinary session in November 1999, "people power," a united front composed of leftist students and the Barisan Nasional (National Front), would force him out of his office.²⁸

²⁴ Team Redaksi, "Refleksi Perjuangan Dakwah Salafiyah di Aljazair: Antara Konsep dan Realitas," *Salafy* 28 (1998): 16-17.

²⁵ Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah," pp. 10-15.

²⁶ Hefner, *Civil Islam*, pp. 128-43. The use of the term "regimist Islam" is problematical because the support of these Islamic groups for Suharto was generally not based on sincere approval of his policies, but rather on political interests of their own.

²⁷ See Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "The Habibie Presidency," in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?*, ed. Geoff Forrester (Leiden and Singapore: KITLV and ISEAS, 1999), pp. 33-47.

²⁸ The Barisan Nasional was created in July 1998 by thirty-seven "secular" leaders, including a number of generals of the '45 generation, generals of the post-'45 generation, and leaders of

In reacting to this pressure, Habibie's supporters came out in force to stand behind him. They were mobilized by the three aforementioned groups and some other hard-line organizations or Muslim parties, such as the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP), the Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren seluruh Indonesia (Islamic Boarding School Cooperative Council of Indonesia, BKPMI), and the Pusat Studi Informasi dan Pembangunan (Center for Information and Development Studies, CIDES), the think-tank of ICMI. These organizations were backed up by a number of influential hard-line Muslim leaders, such as Hamzah Haz, Anwar Harjono, Hartono Mardjono, M. Kholil Ridwan, Ahmad Sumargono, Eggy Sudjana, Fadli Zon, and Adi Sasono. They criticized Habibie's rivals as the parties responsible for the political instability of the state.²⁹ Fearful of the consequences of this instability, they supported the attempts made by Wiranto, the then-Minister of Defense and Security as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI), to mobilize thousands of massed forces armed with bamboo spears, known as Pam Swakarsa, from Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi, and Banten. During the extraordinary session in November, this paramilitary force blocked the area around the headquarters of the MPR in Senayan to prevent the storm of anti-Habibie demonstrators.³⁰

Habibie's attempt to involve the hard-line Muslim organizations in helping him resist opposition challenges provided access for the Salafis to institutional actors. The availability of this access immensely strengthened their confidence as they entered the second phase of their mobilization, when they grew more convinced about the possibility of taking action. Indeed, through this access the Salafis had the opportunity to negotiate and establish cooperation with influential allies in government who could be expected to act as "friends in court, as guarantors against repression, or as acceptable negotiators on their behalf."³¹ Their confidence multiplied when Habibie's political allies explicitly called all Indonesian Muslims to stand eagerly behind him. These allies believed it was crucial to defend Habibie, whom they perceived as the symbol of the Islamization of the state, because by the time Suharto left office, their optimistic hopes that the state would become increasingly influenced by Islam were fading. Their only hope was that Habibie would be able to sustain this strategy.³² Ironically, however, the embattled Habibie failed in this effort because of the pressures from various elements in Indonesian society.

organizations under Golkar like MKGR (Musyawarah Kekeluargaan Gotong Royong, Conference of Brotherhood and Mutual Assistance), Soksi (Sentral Organisasi Karyawan Swadiri Indonesia, Indonesian Central Organization for Independent Employees) and Kosgoro (Kesatuan Organisasi Serbaguna Gotong Royong, United Multi-purpose Organization). For a further account on this issue, see Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), p. 349; see also Kees van Dijk, *A Country in Despair: Indonesia Between 1997 and 2000* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001), pp. 111-13.

²⁹ Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting*, pp. 368-69.

³⁰ On the issue concerning Pam Swakarsa and similar groups, see Kees van Dijk, "The Privatization of Public Order: Relying on the Satgas," in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), pp. 152-67.

³¹ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, p. 79.

³² Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamic Radicalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State," *ISIM Newsletter* 7 (March 2001): 12.

The Salafis' determination to take action became stronger when the challenge faced by Habibie mounted in relation to the emergence of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the leader of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, PDI-P), known for her close relations with secular-nationalist and Christian politicians, as a candidate of president in the run-up towards the general elections in June 1999. Her candidacy immediately sparked a sharp rivalry between the two camps. Supporters of each party attacked the other by exploiting ethnic, religious, and other primordial sentiments. In the thick of this rivalry, a merciless debate emerged about whether or not a woman could be president. This debate provoked reactions from Megawati's supporters, who felt the time had indeed come to stand behind her to win the election at all costs. Some pro-Megawati groups in Surabaya, for instance, stated their determination to die for Megawati, a pledge confirmed by a petition signed in blood. In their counter-arguments, Habibie's supporters insisted that to defend their candidate essentially meant to defend Islam and guarantee the state's continued progress toward Islamization. Consequently, the campaigns of both sides could easily spill over into conflict and violence.³³

Lt. General (ret.) Theo Syafei, a Roman Catholic who served as one of the influential advisors of Megawati, fueled the anger of the pro-Habibie group and, at the same time, provided a ground for anti-Megawati campaigns. He made a speech, a tape of which was circulated, about a plot devised by members of the political elite to transform Indonesia into an Islamic republic by the year 2010. He stated that rather than drawing on the tenets of Islam, Christian notions had inspired and provided a basis for the Indonesian penal code and the ideals of human rights, so that the role of Christians in the historical course of the Indonesian nation-state should not be overlooked. Harsh protests from a variety of Muslim organizations and individuals, particularly from KISDI and ICMI, followed this speech, and many used it as a weapon to attack Megawati.³⁴

The Salafis sought to demonstrate their readiness to stand firm behind Habibie by publishing articles in *Salafy*, where they explained their standpoints on recent political developments. They condemned the embracing of Western democracy and pointed to the Zionists-cum-Christians or, alternatively, the communists, as the conspiratorial parties allegedly responsible for the spread of pernicious democratic or communist ideas in the country. In one of his articles, Thalib referred to democracy as an un-Islamic source of trouble visiting disaster upon contemporary Indonesia. He argued that sovereignty does not belong to people, it belongs absolutely to Allah. Allah is the only sovereign Who should be obeyed.³⁵ Not content with this response, the Salafis subsequently organized the so-called *Apel Siaga*, a Call for Readiness, which was also held in Solo in February 1999. In this gathering, they warned Muslims not to fall into the trap set by what they called the enemies of Muslims. They declared that the best way to guard against such an eventuality would be to give unfailing support to an Islamic government led by a pious male Muslim. The gathering also declared that Muslims were required to wage war against a government led by an infidel (*seorang yang kafir*).³⁶

³³ Van Dijk, *A Country in Despair*, p. 212.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 380-81.

³⁵ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menyoal Demokrasi," *Salafy* 30 (1999): 4-5. See also "Suara Rakyat Tunduk pada Suara Tuhan," *Suara Hidayatullah* (July 1999): 1-6.

³⁶ "Apel Siaga Umat Islam," *Salafy* 30 (1999): 44.

Thalib mentioned two particular reasons why the Salafis needed to voice their political concerns openly. Firstly, he claimed that the Indonesian nation-state had enemies who sought to change the state's direction, inclining it towards communism and socialism. Secondly, he pointed out that this effort by anti-Habibie proponents could threaten the existence and security of the Indonesian nation-state. He believed the hour had come to secure the fate of the country by anticipating the central agenda of the opposition, those parties working to topple Habibie by stirring up anxiety about and hostility to the forces that sought to Islamize Indonesia. He simultaneously condemned a number of pro-democracy leaders, including Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid, the leaders of the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama respectively, as the parties responsible for providing the way for the enemies of Indonesia to realize their ambitions.³⁷

It seems that by communicating the information about what actions people could undertake and demonstrating the potential for forming coalitions, the Salafis created wider political space and incentives for elites and third parties to maneuver. The responses were crucial for their mobilization attempt to reach a new height. In fact, some civilian and military officials contacted Thalib at this time and encouraged him to take action against the political left.³⁸ These meetings apparently encouraged the Salafis to involve themselves more explicitly in public politics, as demonstrated by their decision to support the campaign to disqualify Megawati as a presidential candidate. This campaign was marked by the spread of photographs of Megawati praying in a Balinese Hindu temple in Indonesian newspapers, which were immediately seized upon by Megawati's detractors to suggest that she was a Hindu. While displaying a photo of Megawati praying together with Balinese Hindus, A. M. Saefuddin, a PPP minister in Habibie's cabinet, asked: Are we ready to be led by a Hindu president? Infuriated by Saefuddin's tactic, Hindu Balinese held a demonstration to demand Habibie discharge him from the cabinet. This issue increased opposition to Megawati's candidature. Rallies were organized by different groups to call for voters to reject a woman president.³⁹ Within this context, the Salafis raised some questions to Ibrahim ibn 'Amir al-Ruhayli, a Saudi Arabian who was a lecturer at the Islamic University of Medina. In response to their questions this mufti issued a fatwa (religious opinion), declaring that:

To appoint a woman to be the leader of a Muslim state is sinful [*munkar*]. We are not allowed to choose a Muslim woman to be the leader of Muslim men, just as we are not allowed to appoint a sinful man to be the leader. But if the woman has already been elected to be president, but then signs of her sinfulness emerge, we would not be allowed to resist against her. In principle, a woman cannot be appointed to be a leader. To appoint a woman as president is an act that contradicts the guidance of the Prophet.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Penjelasan Sekitar Sikap Politik Salafi," *Cassette Record* (Jakarta: Divisi Penerangan DPP FKAWJ, 1999).

³⁸ Robert W. Hefner, "Civic Pluralism Denied? The New Media and Jihadi Violence in Indonesia," in *New Media in the Muslim World*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, 2nd ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 158-79.

³⁹ On the demonstrations calling for the rejection of a woman president, see Peter G. Riddell, "The Diverse Voices of Political Islam in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13,1 (2002): 65-84.

⁴⁰ "Sikap Umat Islam Bila Megawati Jadi Presiden," *Salafy* 33 (1999): 53-54.

Pro-Habibie groups did their very best to cut Megawati's feet out from under her, but they scarcely mounted a serious challenge. Thus the 35.7 million votes (34 percent) garnered by her PDI-P party won the election. This result ignited discontent among Habibie's supporters, who then took to the streets to reject Megawati. Megawati supporters stood firm, supporting their leader. Prior to the general session of MPR in October 1999, they demonstrated on Jakarta's streets to voice their support. These demonstrations were countered by Habibie's supporters, including those joined in the Front Jihad Bersatu (United Jihad Front) and Laskar Fi Sabilillah (Holy Force for the Cause of God), who sent a message to take all the steps necessary to block Megawati's path to power.⁴¹

MOLUCCAN CONFLICT

The intensification of the Salafis' mobilization and their shift towards political activism and militancy went hand-in-hand with the escalation of the communal conflict in the Moluccas, which erupted on January 19, 1999. A fight between two youths in the Baturerah Terminal in the heart of the town of Ambon, the provincial capital of the Moluccas, immediately escalated into a clash between two groups of youth identified as the Mardika and Baturerah gangs, respectively. Although fighting between them was by no means unusual, this time it led to the destruction of houses, shops, and public facilities in the area around the terminal, and more importantly, it quickly generated a hostile atmosphere throughout Ambon.⁴² Crowds formed in the streets around Al-Fatah Mosque and in the Mardika Square, near the Maranatha Church. With passions running high, clashes between the two masses were inevitable, particularly on the second day when ferocious crowds began to attack and kill each other. These clashes eventually devolved into communal violence between Muslims and Christians.⁴³

The ferocious attacks by both parties continued without any significant attempt by the security apparatus to bring the violence to an end.⁴⁴ Those who were ostensibly there to maintain law and order seem to have taken no action to stop people from indiscriminately burning, plundering, and killing. In "securing" the situation, they often took up positions behind either mass.⁴⁵ It wasn't until the fourth day of the conflict that the commander of the Regional Military Command (Kodam) of Trikora, which was responsible for the province of the Moluccas, issued an order for his troops to fire on rioters, but by that time the rapidly escalating conflict could

⁴¹ Andrée Feillard, "Indonesian Traditionalist Islam's Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001)," *Archipel* 64 (2002): 120.

⁴² Interviews with Muhammad Farhan, Mukhtar, and Sahjuan Pahasuan, Ambon, April 2003.

⁴³ For a further account of the chronology of the eruption of the conflict, see International Crisis Group (ICG), "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku," *Asia Report* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2000); Lambang Trijono, *Keluar Dari Kemelut Maluku: Refleksi Pengalaman Praktis Bekerja Untuk Perdamaian Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001); and Gerry van Klinken, "The Maluku Wars: Bringing Society Back In," *Indonesia* 71 (April 2001): 1-26.

⁴⁴ Interview with Ali Fauzy, the former head of the Dewan Dakwah branch office of the Moluccas and the Chairman of the Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku, Ambon, April 2003.

⁴⁵ Interview with L. W. J. Hendriks, the Synod Chairman of the Moluccan Protestant Church, Ambon, April 2003.

no longer be curbed. The first three days had already cost the lives of twenty-two people and destroyed hundreds of houses, worship sites, and traditional markets. Ambon soon became a city of death; blood and corpses were scattered everywhere. Access to the city was no longer possible, as roads were blocked by piles of rocks, oil drums, and trees. Virtually all social, political, and economic activities were paralyzed, as if life itself had ground to a halt.⁴⁶

Violence quickly spread to the nearby islands of Seram, Haruku, Saparua, and Manipa. Villages, including Rumberu, Rambatu, Witasi, Kairatu, Kulur, Sirisori Islam, Iha, Pia, Haria, Sirisori Kristen, Ouw, Ulat, Kariu, Pelau, Kailolo, Rohomony and Oma, witnessed the ferocity of their respective citizens in taking people's lives and burning buildings. This rapid spread of the conflict was accelerated and exacerbated by the influx of those trying to flee. They brought with them rumors of the threats issued by other parties. At a later stage, the conflict reached the Southeast, Central, and North Moluccas. As in Ambon, Muslims and Christians in these places attacked and killed each other, creating yet another wave of bloody communal violence.⁴⁷ The conflict that had initially been confined to Ambon engulfed the whole Moluccan archipelago.

It is important to stress here that before the conflict flared up, Muslims and Christians in the Moluccas had lived in relative harmony. They interacted in accord with the tolerant, friendly *pela-gandong* tradition, a customary Moluccan social system that facilitates ties between one or more clans, tribes, or religions.⁴⁸ They did, however, live in different villages (*negeri-negeri*) according to traditional systems of segregation. Consequently, villages were identified either as *Negeri Salam* (Islamic village) or *Negeri Sarani* (Christian village).⁴⁹ Tension between Muslims and Christians in the islands only became apparent after the influx of Muslim migrants from Sulawesi seeking a more prosperous life during the 1980s. The policy of the then-Governor of the Moluccas, Hasan Slamet, who sought to encourage the development of Ambon and other areas in the province, in the process taking advantage of the transmigration program launched by the central government, accelerated the growth of Muslim migrant communities. The migrants soon made their mark as successful small-scale traders, undermining local businessmen. They took over the majority of stalls in the main traditional markets of Batumerah, Mardika, and Pelita.⁵⁰

In the wake of the influx of the Muslim migrants, Islam emerged as one of the salient social indicators in Ambon. This occurred coincidentally alongside the shift in state policy towards political Islam on the national level. The Muslim population

⁴⁶ Tim Peneliti LIPI, "Runtuhnya Pela Gandong: Identifikasi Akar Masalah Kerusuhan Ambon dan Maluku Utara serta Solusinya," in *Bara dalam Sekam: Identifikasi Akar Masalah dan Solusi Konflik-konflik Lokal di Aceh, Maluku, Papua, & Riau*, ed. Tim Peneliti LIPI (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), p. 77.

⁴⁷ Trijono, *Keluar Dari Kemelut*, pp. 45-6. See also International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku," p. 5.

⁴⁸ Dieter Bartels, "Guarding the Invisible Mountain: Intervillage Alliances, Religious Syncretism, and Ethnic Identity Among Ambonese Christians and Moslems in the Moluccas" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1978), p. 56.

⁴⁹ Tamrin Amal Tomagola, "The Moluccan Communal Conflict" (paper presented to the Workshop on Conflict Resolution Strategy [Bogor: Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya UIN Syarif Hidayatullah], October 22-23, 2002), p. 2.

⁵⁰ Interview with M. Nur Tawainela, a Moluccan historian, Ambon, April 2003.

increased steadily and, in keeping with increasing Islamic activism, Ambon witnessed changes in its political make-up. Muslims found important positions in the bureaucracy and gradually took the place of retiring Christian officials. The composition of civil servants in Ambon in 1999 demonstrated that Muslims dominated the bureaucratic sector, comprising 74 percent of the first echelon, 69 percent of the second, and 53 percent of the third.⁵¹ The shifts in local politics were aggravated by growing competition in the job market among urban youths, competitions that became entangled with the inescapable webs of family, village, and religious patrons who provided access to such jobs. Looking at all these dimensions, it is perfectly reasonable that Gerry van Klinken should interpret the Moluccan conflict as "the result of an interaction between long-term 'primordialist' social patterns and a short-term instrumentalization of those patterns in the context of intra-elite competition at the local level."⁵²

Nevertheless, the real tension was only sensed when hundreds of indigenous Ambonese thugs (*premans*), who had been involved in some of Suharto's provocative crony-sponsored acts of violence in Jakarta, were forced to flee to Ambon. They were Christian *premans* led by Milton Matuanakotta, who reportedly had access to Bambang Trihatmojo, Suharto's second son, via Yoris Raweyai, the deputy-head of the Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila). Their return to Ambon was a direct result of the Ketapang riots in November 1998, which juxtaposed them with the Ongen Sangaji-led *preman* group. The latter served in a patron-client relationship with Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, Suharto's eldest daughter, via Abdul Gafur, former Minister for Youth and Sport Affairs in the 1980s. The arrival of the Jakarta *premans*, who brought with them their own private vengeance, was believed to have contributed directly to the eruption of the Moluccan conflict, as they were directly involved in spreading false rumors and inciting violence using walkie-talkies and mobile phones.⁵³

Apparently, the influx of the *premans* was linked to several events that had occurred in Ambon before January 19, 1999, events that have been overlooked by most researchers. From November 16 to 18, 1998, thousands of students from the State University Pattimura (Unpatti) and the Christian University of the Moluccas (UKIM) held a series of demonstrations in front of the District Military Command (Korem) of Pattimura, decrying the dual function of the military. These rallies culminated in a repressive reaction by the military that claimed three lives and injured seventy people. In response, Governor M. Saleh Latuconsina sponsored a meeting on November 20 between the commander of the Korem and religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim communities. In that meeting, the commander was blamed for acting brutally toward students.⁵⁴

Given these events, it was apparently no accident that on December 13 a soldier from the Battalion Infantry 733 Ambon sparked a small riot at a wedding party in Wailete, a village populated mostly by ethnic Buginese, Butonese, and Makassarese

⁵¹ Trijono, *Keluar Dari Kemelut*, p. 22.

⁵² Van Klinken, "The Maluku Wars," p. 2.

⁵³ George Junus Aditjondro, "Guns, Pamphlets, and Handie-Talkies: How the Military Exploited Local Ethno-Religious Tensions in Maluku to Preserve their Political and Economic Privileges," in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel, and Georgia Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), p. 112.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, April 2003.

(BBM), all Muslim groups. As a result, hundreds of people from a Christian village, Hative Besar, attacked Wailete, burned it, and expelled its Muslim population. In a similar case on December 27, hundreds of people from Bak Air, a Christian village, attacked Tawiri, a Muslim village, because a pig owned by a Bak Air family was found dead there. Following these two events, provocative rumors concerning the possibility of riots in the Moluccas circulated throughout the region.⁵⁵

The escalating Moluccan conflict reached its peak after Wahid came to power to replace Habibie in October 1999. His success in defeating Megawati was particularly owed to the political maneuvers of the Middle Axis, *Poros Tengah*, a political alliance of Muslim parties led by Amien Rais, the chairman of the Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party, PAN). Wahid's accession was initially welcomed with euphoria. He was considered a leader who would be able to allay the tensions between the supporters of Habibie and Megawati, and to lead Indonesia towards democracy. Inexplicably, even though there was a need to sustain the process of political reform and maintain his broadly supported legitimacy, Wahid began his term by declaring a willingness to establish commercial links with Israel. Exacerbating matters, he proposed to lift the thirty-four-year ban on the Indonesian Communist Party. These controversial decisions provoked criticism from various quarters, particularly from hard-line Muslims who had long nurtured their hatred of Israel and the Indonesian Communist Party. As a result, Wahid's claim to political legitimacy faded and his popularity quickly plummeted.⁵⁶

Dissatisfaction with Wahid was also rife inside the military. As the main pillar of the New Order, its power was legitimized by the *dwifungsi* (dual-function) doctrine, and it enjoyed certain privileges that guaranteed its access to political, social, and economic institutions. The cherished dual-function doctrine was embodied in the appointments of military officers in the bureaucracy; these officers served variously as ambassadors, provincial governors, district chiefs, and members of parliament.⁵⁷ The fall of Suharto naturally had negative consequences for the military. Its members had to confront demonstrations discrediting their image and calling for their return to the barracks. There were even demands to bring military leaders to international tribunals so that their responsibility for violence during the New Order could be judged.⁵⁸ These demands put the military on the defensive, which may explain why it seemed loath to take action when the Moluccan conflict erupted.

Wahid launched his ambitious plans to reduce the supremacy of an already demoralized and thinly stretched military. Having appointed a civilian, University of Indonesia lecturer Juwono Sudarsono, as the Minister of Defense, he sought to separate the police force from the military by bringing it under the president's personal control. No less important, he dissolved the Coordination Board for the

⁵⁵ Interview with M. Isa Raharusun, the leader of the Muhammadiyah Youth Association, Ambon, April 2003.

⁵⁶ Marcus Mietzner, "Personal Triumph and Political Turmoil: Abdurrahman Wahid and Indonesia's Struggle for Reform," in *The Presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid: An Assessment after the First Year*, Annual Indonesia Lecture Series No. 23, ed. Damien Kingsbury (Monash: Monash Asia Institute, 2000), p. 16.

⁵⁷ For further discussion of the role of the Indonesian Armed Forces in Indonesian politics, see Harold Crouch, *The Indonesian Army in Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

⁵⁸ Patrick Walters, "The Indonesian Armed Forces in the Post-Soeharto Era," in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos*, ed. Geoff Forrester (Leiden and Singapore: KITLV and ISEAS, 1999), pp. 59-64.

Assistance of the Maintenance of National Stability (Bakorstanas) and the Board for Special Investigation (Litsus), two institutions that had enabled the military to interfere in various political and social affairs. The disenchantment of the military reached its peak when Wahid rejected Wiranto's plans to reorganize the army's territorial units and even forced this four-star general to resign his position as the Coordinating Minister of Political and Security Affairs, on the grounds that he had been responsible for human rights violations in East Timor. Tensions between Wahid and the military, strongly influenced by Wiranto, continued to escalate when the president sought to place a number of pro-reform generals in strategic command positions.⁵⁹

The escalation of the Moluccan conflict during Wahid's presidency opened the way for a violent phase of Salafi mobilization. Salafis began to speak about the need to fight jihad, which they believed was the only solution to the conflict. This brought about a confrontation with Wahid. He tried to order the security and military apparatus to repress any jihad mobilization and threatened to muster Banser (Multi-purpose Unit, the paramilitary wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama youth organization, Anshor, which acted as the NU's own security forces) in response. But the Salafis did not back down. They continued calling for jihad and mobilizing fighters. Both sides had apparently decided to do their utmost to win the struggle. For them it was a matter of life and death.

In their battle against Wahid, the Salafis enjoyed the support not only of hard-line Muslim organizations but also of military elites who saw the chance to utilize militant Muslim groups to retaliate against Wahid for sacking them from key military positions. At that time, high-ranking military officers were rumored to have persuaded and promised military and financial assistance to Salafi leaders.⁶⁰ Such a backup was doubtless extremely important for the Salafis who sought to mobilize forces for violent jihad actions. It provided not only an inducement for them to take action immediately but also a guarantee that they would not face repression from the security apparatus and the military, thereby reducing negative consequences of their action.

THE BIRTH OF FKAJ

Having secured the support of military elites and hard-line Muslim leaders, the Salafi leaders began mobilizing fighters, emphasizing the need to wage jihad in order to assist Muslims in the Moluccas to repel the attacks of their Christian enemies. Formulated in a master frame, they stated their grievance in the general terms, stressing how the conflict had killed thousands of Muslims and expelled hundreds of thousands more from the islands. From their perspective, the conflict had been allowed to escalate because the government stood by idly, indifferent to the fate of Moluccan Muslims who were facing genocidal attacks from the enemies of Islam. They argued that this injustice was rooted in the government's policy of siding with Christians and leaving intervention to the Zionist-Christian international powers

⁵⁹ Dewi Fortuna Anwar et al., *Gus Dur versus Militer: Studi tentang Hubungan Sipil-Militer di Era Transisi* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002), pp. 67-68. For further readings, see Sukardi Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military after the New Order* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004).

⁶⁰ Marcus Mietzner, "Politics of Engagement: The Indonesian Armed Forces, Islamic Extremism, and the 'War on Terror,'" *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 9,1 (Spring 2002): 71-84.

through RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan, Republic of the South Moluccas), which they sarcastically called *Republik Maluku Serani*, Republic of the Christian Moluccas.⁶¹

In their attempt to achieve “frame hegemony,” the Salafis shrewdly utilized and co-opted the discourses prevailing in the Islamist print media, notably *Sabili* and *Media Dakwah*, which were derived from a variety of perceptions and interpretations put forward by hard-line Muslim leaders and politicians. The first was a discourse concerning separatism that blamed RMS, a rebellious movement that erupted under the leadership of Ch. Soumokil in Ambon in the 1950s, as the driving force behind the conflict. According to this discourse, the remaining forces of RMS, supported by their Netherlands-based international sponsor, deliberately instigated the conflict in an effort to set up a Moluccan state that would be based on Christian principles. They claimed that the ultimate goal of these forces was to disintegrate Indonesia and transform it into a Christian state. The group spread messages warning that Christians are constantly keen to enforce their politico-economic hegemony on the Republic of Indonesia at the expense of Muslims, whom they seek to marginalize, and declared that Christians had succeeded in usurping power during the first two decades of the New Order.⁶²

The framing of this discourse focused on RMS first appeared at the national level on January 28, 1999 at a press conference organized by two hard-line Muslim groups, KISDI and PPMI, led by Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sudjana, respectively, both of whom are notorious for mobilizing Muslim masses for rallies and demonstrations. Lt. General A. M. Hendropriyono, the Minister of Transmigration during Habibie’s presidency, made it clear in a public meeting in Ambon on March 9, 1999 that RMS was to blame for the Moluccan conflict. General Faisal Tanjung, the Coordinating Minister of Political and Security Affairs in the Habibie cabinet, clarified Hendropriyono’s statement by alleging evidence of RMS involvement.⁶³ Interpretations were offered asserting that the engagement of RMS was inseparable from Christians’ attempts to rebel against the Republic of Indonesia by inflaming communal—ethnic, religious, and racial—conflicts in various parts of the country, such as Ketapang in West Kalimantan, and Kupang in Eastern Nusa Tenggara. Some Muslim leaders and politicians have argued that these attempts gained greater impetus when East Timor proclaimed its independence following the referendum on August 30, 1999.⁶⁴

The second frame was a discourse about Muslim cleansing, which portrayed the Moluccan conflict as part of a Christian agenda to expel all Muslims from the Moluccas. The dissemination of the discourse was spearheaded by *Sabili*, which from the first months of the conflict ran provocative headlines emphasizing the ferocity of Christians in taking lives of Muslims and destroying mosques and houses that belonged to Muslim communities. *Sabili*, Indonesia’s most popular Islamist magazine, declared that the ferocity of Christians in the islands could only be

⁶¹ Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama’ah, *Seruan Jihad ke Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Kadiv Penerangan FKAWJ, 2000).

⁶² See Husein Umar, “Intoleransi Kaum Nasrani Terhadap Umat Islam,” in *Gereja-Gereja Dibakar, Membedak Akar Konflik SARA di Indonesia*, ed. Adian Husaini (Jakarta: Dea Press, 2000), p. 1-24.

⁶³ Aditjondro, “Guns, Pamphlets and Handie-Talkies,” p. 115.

⁶⁴ “Kudengar Nama Allah Memanggil,” *Sabili* 15,6 (February 1999): 26-29 and “Ancaman Disintegrasi Dari Ambon,” *Sabili* 15,6 (February 1999): 33-36.

compared to that of Serbians when they killed and raped thousands of innocent Bosnians.⁶⁵ *Media Dakwah* portrayed the Moluccan issue in the same tone, reporting the testimony of Abdul Aziz, the imam of Al-Fatah Mosque in Ambon. This magazine narrated how Christians had wildly attacked Muslims praying in a local mosque, raped a dozen women in front of their husbands, and killed hundreds of injured Muslims and pregnant women in a hospital.⁶⁶ This discourse was broadcast even more cogently through the circulation of photos, video compact disks (VCDs), and amateur films of atrocities committed by Christians. These items were sold in markets and on the streets in various cities in Indonesia, spreading "the insistent, repetitive narrative of victimization resurrected on and out of body parts."⁶⁷

Keeping pace with the circulation of stories about acts of cruelty committed by Christians, reports concerned with the expulsion of Muslim migrants from the Moluccas attracted special attention among hard-line Muslim organizations. News circulated that by March 1999 seventy thousand people, most of whom were Butonese, Buginese, and Makassarese from Sulawesi, had fled their homes. Desperate to leave, they boarded outgoing ships, some even scrambling up the mooring cables.⁶⁸ It is said that they were the main targets of native Christians, who rallied using the slogan "BBM," an acronym that serves in the Moluccas as a cynical reference to Butonese, Buginese and Makassarese migrants. According to Moluccan Muslims, this acronym had been transformed by Moluccan Christians to stand for "Burn and kill the Muslims" (*Bakar, Bunuh Muslim*). The explosion of this issue triggered mass demonstrations and rallies. In mid-March 1999, thousands of Muslims led by Ahmad Sumargono, Abdul Rasyid Abdullah Syafi'i, and Abu Bakar al-Habsyi joined a fifteen-kilometer march from Al-Barkah Mosque in Tebet to al-Azhar Mosque in Kebayoran Baru in Jakarta. They questioned the "indifference" of Indonesians to the fate of Moluccan Muslims while asserting the necessity to wage jihad against Christians.⁶⁹ Some Muslim organizations, such as the Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang, KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, the United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students), HAMMAS (Himpunan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim antar-Kampus, Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students), HMI-MPO (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi, Muslim Student Association-the Assembly of the Savior of the Organization), PII (Pelajar Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Students), and FPI (Front Pembela Islam, Front of the Defenders of Islam), opened recruiting booths to send volunteers to the Moluccan islands.⁷⁰

What made these efforts to frame the issue of Muslim cleansing even more pressing was that it was constructed partly to resist the Christian counter-frame. Christian churches spread speculations that the conflict could not be disassociated from the attempt by Muslim forces to Islamize the islands by expelling Christians. In

⁶⁵ "Tentara Allah Turun di Ambon," *Sabili* 17,6 (March 1999): 54-61 and "Moslem Cleansing, Ambon Tidak Sendirian," *Sabili* 18,6 (March 1999): 25-28.

⁶⁶ "Mereka Membunuh Secara Keji dan Biadab," *Media Dakwah* 297 (March 1999): 24-27.

⁶⁷ Patricia Spyer, "Fire Without Smoke and Other Phantoms of Ambon's Violence," *Indonesia* 74 (October 2002): 33.

⁶⁸ See Van Dijk, *A Country in Despair*, p. 387.

⁶⁹ "Kami Siap Berjihad," *Media Dakwah* 298 (April 1999): 14-15. See also Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, *Ambon Bersimbah Darah, Ekspresi Ketakutan Nasrani* (Jakarta: Dea Press, 1999).

⁷⁰ See Jaiz, *Ambon Bersimbah Darah*, pp. 186-88.

his testimony to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), John A. Titley, a Protestant minister, explicitly argued that the Moluccan conflict was basically the result of a campaign to drive Christianity completely out of eastern Indonesia.⁷¹ To support this claim, many parties associated with churches circulated photos, VCDs, and amateur films recording the alleged atrocities of Muslims. The Masariku Network, for instance, provided Christians with eyewitness reports by refugees, people attacked or forcibly converted, or by traumatized children and women. The Crisis Center for the Diocese of Ambon likewise distributed photos of victims and property damage.⁷²

The third discourse framed by the Muslim cohort was the accusation that Zionists were complicit with Moluccan Christians, for Zionists perceived this conflict as an opportunity to realize their ambition to destabilize Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. Stories were circulated about the collaboration between Zionists and RMS in attacking Muslims, complete with reports that the Star of David had appeared on RMS flags in Christian villages.⁷³ Another tale claimed that the RMS website had posted an article by David Horowitz, an American Jew, declaring the readiness of Israelis to support the struggle of Christians in the Moluccas.⁷⁴ Rumors of a Zionist conspiracy abounded especially after Wahid had come to power and proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.⁷⁵ Wahid was accused of collaborating with Zionists and thereby escalating a conflict that had already seriously harmed Muslims in the islands and was bound to worsen.⁷⁶

Frames proposed by the hard-line Muslim leaders and politicians were reinforced and legitimized when the so-called Tobelo massacre occurred on December 26, 1999 in Halmahera island's Tobelo District. This tragedy killed at least five hundred Muslims and expelled more than ten thousand survivors.⁷⁷ In reaction, thousands of sympathizers of DDII, KISDI, GPI (Gerakan Pemuda Islam, Muslim Youth Movement), KAMMI, and HAMMAS poured onto the streets of Jakarta to demand the government work more seriously to curb the violence. They did not stop there, but proceeded to organize campaigns and demonstrations calling for jihad. These campaigns culminated in a religious gathering said to include a million Muslims, *tabligh akbar sejuta umat*, in January 2000 around the National Monument (Monas) in Jakarta. This gathering was organized by a young NII (Negara Islam Indonesia) activist, Al Chaidar, and a number of prominent Muslim politicians, including Amien Rais, Hamzah Haz, Ahmad Sumargono, Eggy Sudjana, Husein Umar, and Daud Rasyid, who gave speeches criticizing Wahid for his perceived

⁷¹ Johan H. Meuleman, "From New Order to National Disintegration: The Religious Factor between Reality, Manipulation, and Rationalization," *Archipel* 64 (2002): 84.

⁷² Birgit Brauchler, "Cyberidentities at War: Religion, Identity, and the Internet in the Moluccan Conflict," *Indonesia* 75 (April 2003): 123-51.

⁷³ "Ambon; Skenario Yang Belum Selesai," *Abadi* 19 (March 1999): 14.

⁷⁴ "Skenario Besar Tragedi Ambon," *Sabili* 18,6 (March 1999): 20-24.

⁷⁵ On the reactions of hard-line Muslims against this proposal, see Adian Husaini, *Zionis Israel Prek, Pergolakan Umat Islam Indonesia Melawan Zionis* (Jakarta: Dea Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ See "Gus Dur-Zionis Main Mata," *Sabili* 11,7 (November 1999): 16-19; and "Mungkinkah Ambon Kembali Damai," *Sabili* 11,7 (November 1999): 54.

⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku," p. 8.

indifference to the Moluccan conflict. They even presented Wahid with a two-week deadline, by which time he was expected to solve the crisis.⁷⁸

The presence of the aforementioned influential personalities at this event indicates that the issue of the Moluccan conflict had emerged as unifying purpose among diverse camps of hard-line Muslims and political actors. Concern with this issue apparently generated what Asef Bayat refers to—alluding to Benedict Anderson's famous phrase—as “imagined solidarity,” which is “forged spontaneously among differential actors who come to a consensus by imagining, subjectively constructing, common interests and shared values between themselves.”⁷⁹ Different interests and purposes associated with heterogeneous groups and actors converged as the parties sought to demonstrate their solidarity in support of the Moluccan Muslims, who were considered victims of Islam's enemies.

Only one week after this event, the Salafis issued their jihad resolution and proclaimed the establishment of FKAWJ on the occasion of their *tabligh akbar* in the Kridosono Sport Stadium in Yogyakarta at the beginning of January 2000, as mentioned earlier. Under the aegis of this organization, members were no longer hesitant about taking to the streets to voice their protests against various policies adopted by Wahid. They were particularly hostile to Wahid's proposals to lift the thirty-four-year ban on the Indonesian Communist Party and establish commercial links with Israel. They reiterated their determination and readiness to fight a physical jihad in order to assist Muslims in the islands and defend them from what they referred to as genocidal attacks by Christians. In this way, the Salafis began to mobilize a consensus, which was necessary in an effort to navigate “an emotional valance aimed at converting passivity into action.”⁸⁰

The Salafis vigorously mobilized resources through communication channels, the division of labor, and the financing of their activism. This mobilization effort was facilitated by the existence of the Salafi *da'wa* network, which consisted of *halqa* (“circle,” a forum for study) and *daura* (“turn,” a short-term workshop) centers scattered on university campuses, *pesantrens* and mosques, as well as Salafi communities living in particular areas of concentration. These centers served as the recruitment pools through which voluntary fighters were found and channeled. The cohesiveness of this network, which, as I shall demonstrate in chapter five, resembles a religious sect, reduced the free-riding problem, a situation commonly arising in public goods contexts, in which players may benefit from the actions of others without contributing to the collective effort. All Salafis associated with the network felt themselves necessarily part of the mobilization's success. It was natural, therefore, that these calls immediately reverberated, fueling the zeal of resistance shared by a number of members in the network. The concept of the magnificence of jihad, which had frequently been discussed in religious lectures glorified in their religious publications, had apparently been imparted successfully.

The best cadres among the Salafis were the backbone of this mobilization effort, as they were active in attracting support, recruiting masses for rallies and demonstrations, persuading all potential *mujahidin* to join the movement, and

⁷⁸ Irfan S. Awwas, *Aksi Sejuta Ummat dan Issu Negara Islam: Dialog Internet* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2000).

⁷⁹ Asef Bayat, “Islamism and Social Movement Theory,” *Third World Quarterly* 26,5 (July 2005).

⁸⁰ See Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 112-13. See also Klandermans, “Grievance Interpretation and Success Expectations,” pp. 183-91.

collecting money from donors. They opened booths to register aspiring *mujahidin* at public venues, including street intersections, markets, and mosques. Without hesitation or reluctance, they frequently addressed passers-by, telling them about the ferocity of the Christian enemies, while distributing forms for donations and registration to participate in jihad in the Moluccas. Simultaneously, their leaders persuaded civilian and military elites to give additional support and launched campaigns by visiting a number of cities in Indonesia. They sought to convince other aspirant *mujahidin* to enlist themselves alongside the Laskar Jihad fighters prepared to go to the Moluccas.

FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE MUSLIM *UMMA* (MUSLIM COMMUNITY)

The Salafis sought to frame their actions by placing the Moluccan issue more coherently within the context of global conflicts in the Muslim world. In what can be referred to as a manifesto, they stated that the United States, after it had succeeded in winning the Cold War against the Soviet Union, lost no time in proclaiming itself the sole superpower and assuming the prerogative to subjugate Islam, which it accused of being the greatest and most dangerous enemy in the globalized world. The Salafis interpreted the success of the United States as a victory of Zionists and (Christian) crusaders, who had long borne a grudge against and nurtured a hatred of Islam. They declared that conflicts and violence that had erupted in different parts of the Muslim world, including Bosnia, the Philippines, North Africa, and Chechnya, were all evidence of the fierceness that the enemies of Islam displayed in their efforts to eliminate all Muslims from the face of the earth.⁸¹

Within the framework of the conspiracy rhetoric blaming Zionists and Christian crusaders as those responsible for the escalation of the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis reconstructed social reality, to use Klanderman's term, in a way that encouraged an analytical shift from individuals to groups.⁸² This attempt was important to establish the foundation for their collective action. Through the reconstruction of social reality, the Salafis were able to raise the consciousness of the movement's potential recruits considerably, as well as win the attention and sympathy of spectators. As Tarrow puts it, a "frame" is a message related to the context of interests and conflicts in play that appeal to people's emotions.⁸³ On the basis of their alternative view of social reality, the Salafis defined the meaning of their actions, giving it new value, and created a new collective identity. This new collective identity would in turn determine the orientation of their action, a process that is instrumental to the success of mobilization.

It goes without saying that by emphasizing the ferocity of the conflict and linking it to the much broader interest of Indonesian Muslims, the Salafis in fact began to engage in the process of "frame alignment." Their emotional definition of the situation facilitated what David A. Snow and his collaborators refer to as "frame bridging," enabling them to incorporate elements produced by sectors of public

⁸¹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Buku Petunjuk dan Latar Belakang Pengiriman Laskar Jihad ke Maluku* (Malang: Kadiv. Penerangan FKAWJ Malang, 2000), pp. 2-3.

⁸² Bert Klandermans, "The Social Construction of Protest and Multi-organizational Fields," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. A. D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 92-93.

⁸³ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, pp. 107-08.

opinion that might otherwise remain separated from one another. This step was followed by “frame amplification,” when the Salafi leaders sought to articulate an interpretation of the world that could otherwise remain confused and vague. They drew a clear-cut definition of the world as “us” and “them” and claimed to be in the right. Through “frame extension,” their concern with the Moluccan conflict was extended to include more general goals that revolve around the issue of the defense of Indonesian Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. All these processes led to “frame transformation,” which rendered their messages more coherent and aligned them with the dominant interpretation of reality found in public opinion.⁸⁴



Figures VI and VII: Ja'far Umar Thalib's book and the monthly *Sabili* explain the Moluccan issue under the framework of conspiracy theory.

In the Salafis' (alternative) view of social reality, the United States appeared to be a floating empty signifier, encompassing injustice, ferocity, and domination. This view of the United States has become a master frame that has provided the medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign the blame for the problem they are attempting to ameliorate. As a mode of interpretation, it is inclusive, in that it allows for extensive ideational amplification and extension. The extent of this master frame's resonance is determined by the set of the signified items attached to it. Herein lies the significance of naming Zionists and Christian crusaders as the parties responsible for the United States' policies. They are two “main enemies of Islam” whose enmity and cruelty have been vividly exploited in the Islamist discourses. This identification could produce emotional pivots around which the future direction of Salafi activism turns. At the same time, it provided a common language that could be used to build alliances across specific

⁸⁴ Snow et al., “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest,” pp. 461-81. See also Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, pp. 74-75.

movements and to articulate a more comprehensive criticism of the systematic form of domination that affected all the movement constituencies in various ways.

The Salafis defined what happened in Indonesia from the perspective of global conspiracy theory. They argued that Indonesia has long been the target of destruction by the enemies of Islam because it is the world's largest Muslim country, with a potential to challenge the hegemony of Zionist-Crusader international forces. They claimed that these enemies have succeeded not only in perpetrating their evil plans through economic sabotage, the manipulation of human rights rhetoric, and other activities aimed at setting in motion the reformation process that had resulted in the collapse of the New Order regime, but also in inflaming riots, turmoil, and communal conflicts in various regions, including Aceh, Papua, and the Moluccas. From their point of view, the contemporary escalation of conflicts in those regions was a clear sign of the enemy's serious intent to eliminate the Republic of Indonesia.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the Salafis questioned the legitimacy of the domestic socio-political arrangements that, they claimed, had created the opportunity for the enemies of Islam to realize their ambitions. Thalib argued that the enemies of Islam were able to perpetrate their evil plans in Indonesia because the domestic situation was undergoing dramatic changes marked by the breakdown of socio-cultural bounds, systematic condemnation of the Indonesian military, and an increase in security disturbances. He was convinced that the momentum for this destruction was created when Wahid—whom he blamed as a leader indifferent to the fate of Muslims and inclined instead toward sympathy for Zionists, Christians, and Communists—came to power. He cited Wahid's policies, such as the welcoming of an Israeli trade delegation, his proposal to revive the Indonesian Communist Party, and his encouragement of the widespread availability of leftist and communist-leaning books, as evidence of the president's intimacy with "the three main enemies of Islam."⁸⁶ "This was not the only evidence," said Thalib, "because Wahid had even tried hard to eliminate the power of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the Police as the guardians of the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia through the issue of human rights violation."⁸⁷ He stated that this error was an unforgivable sin on Wahid's part, and that the president should be ousted from the political arena of Indonesia.⁸⁸

To achieve frame resonance, the Salafis attempted to contextualize their concern with the Moluccan issue by linking it to rumors about the involvement of the Moluccan Protestant Church and PDI-P in initiating the conflict. In a manner similar to the discourse produced by the Islamist print media, they accused the Moluccan Protestant Church and PDI-P of being local collaborators of RMS, operating to expel all Muslims from the Moluccan islands so that they would be able to Christianize the islands and separate them from the Republic of Indonesia. They were convinced that

⁸⁵ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Resolusi Jihad Sebagai Jawaban Atas Pembantaian Muslimin di Maluku," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000). A summary of this speech was published in www.laskarjihad.or.id/resolusijihad.

⁸⁶ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Saatnya Mengobarkan Jihad," *Salafy* 34 (2000): 2.

⁸⁷ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menuju Kemenangan Mujahidin dan Situasi Terakhir di Maluku," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

⁸⁸ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Target Kami Menyingkirkan Gus Dur," interview, *Panji Masyarakat* 1,6 (April 2000).

the Moluccan conflict was simply a "pilot project" of the enemies of Islam to Christianize Indonesia within the framework of the "*Proyek Kristenisasi Salib*," the alleged Christianization crusade led by the Zionist-cum-Christian international powers, the success of which would determine their subsequent agendas.⁸⁹

The Salafis concluded that the Moluccan conflict was, in fact, a war between Muslims and Christians. This conclusion projected the medieval Christian crusades into the present in such a way that it reinforced the religious dimension of the conflict:

The Moluccan conflict is a rebellion launched by Christians in the Moluccas under the operation code "Troops of Christ, God of Love and Affection." It is a Crusade whose aim is to expel all Muslims from the islands, on which a Christian State of Alifuru (which includes Papua, the Moluccas, Eastern Nusa Tenggara, and East Timor) will be established, separated from the Republic of Indonesia.⁹⁰

Following statements of this sort, the Salafis typically offered various examples of Christian atrocities in order to expose the ferocity of Christians who claimed to have been fighting in the spirit of the Crusades. Mutilated bodies said to be the remains of Muslims massacred by Christians, damaged mosques, and graffiti containing messages that insulted Islam were broadcast to support their claim. In so doing, the Islamists exploited more coherently images of victimization, which, as Elliot Colla puts it, provide an aura of righteousness to legitimate the use of violence in the cause of defense.⁹¹

By projecting this image of the Moluccan conflict as a result of a conspiracy contrived by the enemies of Muslims to undermine Islam and destroy the territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, the Salafis combined religious rhetoric and nationalist sentiment perfectly. God and nation, state and Islam—these concepts were all blurred in their rhetoric. This fusion undoubtedly made their argument stronger. They now had sufficient grounds to claim the prerogative of saving Islam and the Muslim *umma* from the attacks of belligerent infidels, and, at the same time, of guarding the Republic of Indonesia in a manner reminiscent of the brave effort mounted by Indonesian soldiers during the fight for independence. In this way, they shared incentives and a new, collective identity among members, thus enabling their cohorts to emerge as heroes for their religion and religious fellows and, simultaneously, as patriots seeking to defend their beloved state. This self-proclaimed image in turn bolstered their new collective identity, which would mobilize followers and provide cohesion.

Confronted with the complexity of the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis saw no solution except jihad. They insisted that jihad was necessary, particularly because the state did not have sufficient power and political will to protect the Indonesian

⁸⁹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menghadapi Kristenisasi di Indonesia," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

⁹⁰ Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, Mempelopori Perlawanan Terhadap Kedurjanaan Hegemoni Salibis-Zionis Internasional di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2001), pp. 34-35.

⁹¹ Elliot Colla, "A Culture of Righteousness and Martyrdom," *ISIM Newsletter* 14 (June 2004): 6-7.

Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. They were convinced that, through jihad, the maneuvers of the enemies of Islam seeking to undermine the growth of Islam in Indonesia could be halted and, at the same time, the fate of Moluccan Muslims could be turned. In addition, jihad would set Indonesia free from the politico-economic crisis that had threatened its existence and integration. In short, jihad was viewed as the only way to solve myriad problems afflicting Indonesian Muslims today and to restore the unity of the Indonesian nation-state.⁹² They extolled jihad as the most effective self-defense mechanism and the strategy that would allow Indonesia's Muslims to challenge the evil plots of those forces inimical to Islam. "This is an imperative when Muslims are attacked by belligerent infidels," said Thalib.⁹³

The Salafi leaders demonstrated the magnificence of jihad by connecting it to the concept of martyrdom, thereby multiplying the incentives for potential fighters to join Laskar Jihad. They asserted that those who fulfill the call for jihad to assist their Muslim brothers attacked by belligerent infidels deserve to receive the title of martyr if killed on the so-called jihad battlefields. Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, another ideologue of the Salafis, pointed out that the reward for a martyr is nothing less than heaven; he supported this declaration by quoting many passages in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions. Expounding on these sources, he highlighted the distinctiveness of martyrs in several ways: they are pure Muslims buried in the clothes in which they die, who do not need to be washed before burial; their self-sacrifice and meritorious act render them free from sin, and therefore they are not subject to a post-mortem interrogation by the angels, Munkar and Nakir; they bypass "purgatory" and proceed to one of the highest levels of heaven near the Throne of God.⁹⁴

THE FATWAS ON JIHAD

The determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas required the Salafis, as part of the transnational *da'wa* community, to request fatwas from a number of prominent religious authorities in the Middle East, all of whom were linked to Bin Baz, the former head of the Saudi Arabian Council of Senior *Ulama*. These included 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin al-'Abbad, Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, Salih al-Suhaymi, Ahmad Yahya ibn Muhammad al-Najm, and Wahid al-Jabiri. In requesting the fatwas, the Salafis had conveyed their questions via fax and telephone to their own cadres studying there, who then presented them to the muftis. Because the muftis showed some reluctance about issuing the expected fatwas, Thalib and as-Sewed came to visit them in order to persuade them personally and provide some additional information.⁹⁵ It is worth mentioning that, though not binding, the fatwa as a religious opinion specifically given by learned (qualified) persons (muftis) in response to questions posed by *mustaftis* (the persons who

⁹² Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Jihad Fi Sabilillah: Solusi Problematika Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia," *Salafy* 34 (2000): 2-5.

⁹³ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Jihad, Solusi Akhir Menghadapi Separatis RMS," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: FKAJ, 2000).

⁹⁴ Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, "Keutamaan Jihad dan Mujahidin," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: DPP FKAJ, 2000).

⁹⁵ Interview with Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Degolan, Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

request the opinions), is crucial in the Muslim world. It has become an integral part of the legal practice and discourse of Muslims.⁹⁶

According to the Indonesian translation of the fatwas that were subsequently issued, the six muftis made the following pronouncements. In the opinion of al-`Abbad of Medina, to go to the battlefield in the Moluccas to defend Muslims in the islands is lawful (*disyariatkan*), provided that it is not harmful to the Muslims themselves and the Muslims are in a defensive position. Al-Najm of Mecca, a member of the Saudi Arabian Senior `Ulama Committee, agreed with the necessity of waging jihad in the Moluccas and suggested the jihad was an obligation for Muslims who were duty-bound to help their oppressed brothers. He pronounced, "This obligation must be fulfilled by Muslims at different levels in accordance with their individual abilities; some must help with their bodies, others with their property, and others with their minds." But he warned the Salafis to first take the following steps: (1) to choose a representative who would meet the ruler, to advise and approach him; (2) if the ruler took their suggestions into consideration, he should be obeyed; (3) if the ruler rejected their suggestions, Muslims were allowed to rebel against him as long as they had sufficient power to carry out this response.⁹⁷

More obviously, the engagement of Muslims in the Moluccan conflict was judged by al-Wadi'i of Yemen to be an individual duty (*fard `ayn*) for Indonesian Muslims and to be a collective duty (*fard kifaya*) for Muslims outside Indonesia. He clearly asked the Salafis "to arise and conduct jihad in the name of God and overthrow Christians who occupy Muslim territory" and advised all Muslims "to assist the *mujahidin* by contributing property and any valuable thing, because God will bestow guidance on those who help each other." Taking the same tone, Rabi' al-Madkhali of Medina argued that the engagement of Muslims in the Moluccan war was an individual duty, since Muslims were being attacked by Christians.

The necessity of helping the Moluccan Muslims was also declared by al-Jabiri of Medina. He was of the opinion that to defend Muslims being attacked by their enemies is compulsory. The same point was argued by al-Suhaymi, also from Medina. He stated that jihad is mandatory in troubled areas, providing Muslims have sufficient power to undertake it. But he warned the Salafis not to neglect their main task of conducting Islamic missions (*da'wa*). Addressing the Salafis directly, he continued, "[Y]ou must adhere to the *salafi* way [*manhaj al-salafi*] at all times and call people to adhere to it. Should you have strength to help your Muslim brothers attacked by their Christian enemies, do so. Should you not have such strength, concentrate on *da'wa* alone."

On the basis of these fatwas, Thalib convincingly declared the Moluccan conflict to be a holy war against Christian enemies attacking Muslims. He emphasized that engagement in the war was a duty that should be undertaken by Muslims in order to

⁹⁶ For an overview about fatwa, see Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers, "Introduction," in *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). As for the dynamics of fatwa in the context of Indonesian Islam, see Nico J. G. Kaptein, "The Voice of the 'Ulama': Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 125 (2004): 115-30.

⁹⁷ All the fatwas quoted here were disseminated on the deactivated Laskar Jihad website (www.laskarjihad.or.id/risalah/fatwa), in the periodical *Salafy*, and in various interviews given by Thalib. For the Indonesian texts, see Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa: Seputar Jihad di Maluku," *Salafy* 33 (2000): 8-9.

honor Allah's message. Quoting Ibn Taymiyya, he insisted, "Should our enemy attack Muslims, to confront the attack would be an obligation incumbent on the Muslims who are being attacked and it would be compulsory for other Muslims to help them." He argued that this was obligatory because, having succumbed to the pressure from Zionist-cum-Christian international powers, the government did not have either the ability or the power to put an end to the war.⁹⁸

There is no doubt that the issuance of these fatwas was significant in the process of mobilizing volunteers for what would be a dangerous, violent collective action. Having been issued by the prominent Salafi authorities, these fatwas first of all provided Indonesian Salafis associated with Thalib the legitimacy to call for jihad in the Moluccas. This legitimacy was crucial for the Salafis to achieve an internal consensus, and it provided a solid foundation that allowed them to cross the boundary set by their fundamental doctrinal position, which required adherents to follow a consistently non-political *da'wa* strategy. The need for this legitimacy was demonstrated when some elements among the Indonesian Salafis themselves voiced opposition to the call for jihad. Those associated with Abu Nida, for instance, strongly criticized this call by reminding their fellows that Salafi *da'wa* was their original cause. They circulated opinions underlining the illegitimacy of Thalib's call for jihad, while declaring that the fatwas supporting the call were forgeries.⁹⁹ They argued that,

"... as emphasized by our mentors, such as Ibrahim al-Ruhayli, Salih al-Suhaymi, 'Ubayd al-Jabiri, 'Abd al-Samad al-Suhaymi, among other muftis, who gathered in al-Suhaymi's house, that what our Salafi brothers would carry out in the Moluccas is not jihad, since jihad should be waged under the banner of Islam and with the approval of a legitimate imam ... It cannot be imagined that jihad is fought only because of a conflict taking place between Christians and Muslims.¹⁰⁰

Armed with the fatwas, however, Thalib succeeded in overcoming hesitation among some Salafis and other potential fighters who might otherwise have been reluctant to join Laskar Jihad by clearly defining jihad as a mechanism used to defend Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. In the fatwas, the defensive character of jihad is indeed underscored. In the context established by the fatwas, "jihad" specifically connotes a holy war against Christian enemies who are attacking Muslims in the Moluccas and trying to expel them from the islands. The perception of the Moluccan conflict as a case of thousands of Muslims being killed and driven from their homes was emphasized by Thalib when he requested the fatwas. Some of the fatwas explicitly state that jihad in the Moluccas is lawful as long as it is needed to protect Muslims from the attacks of their enemies. These statements made it clear that legitimacy was contingent upon a particular context.

⁹⁸ For a further account on this issue, see Noorhaidi Hasan, "Between Transnational Interest and Domestic Politics: Understanding Middle Eastern Fatwas on Jihad in the Moluccas," *Islamic Law and Society*, Theme Issue, ed. Nico Kaptein and Michael Laffan, 12,1 (January 2005): 73-92.

⁹⁹ See Armen Halim Jasman, "Rekayasa Fatwa?" *As-Sunnah* 5,1 (2001): 5-7.

¹⁰⁰ Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Abdur Rahman at-Tamimi, "Nasehat dan Fatwa Syeikh Ibrahim Ar-Ruhaili," *As-Sunnah* 5,3 (2001): 35-36.

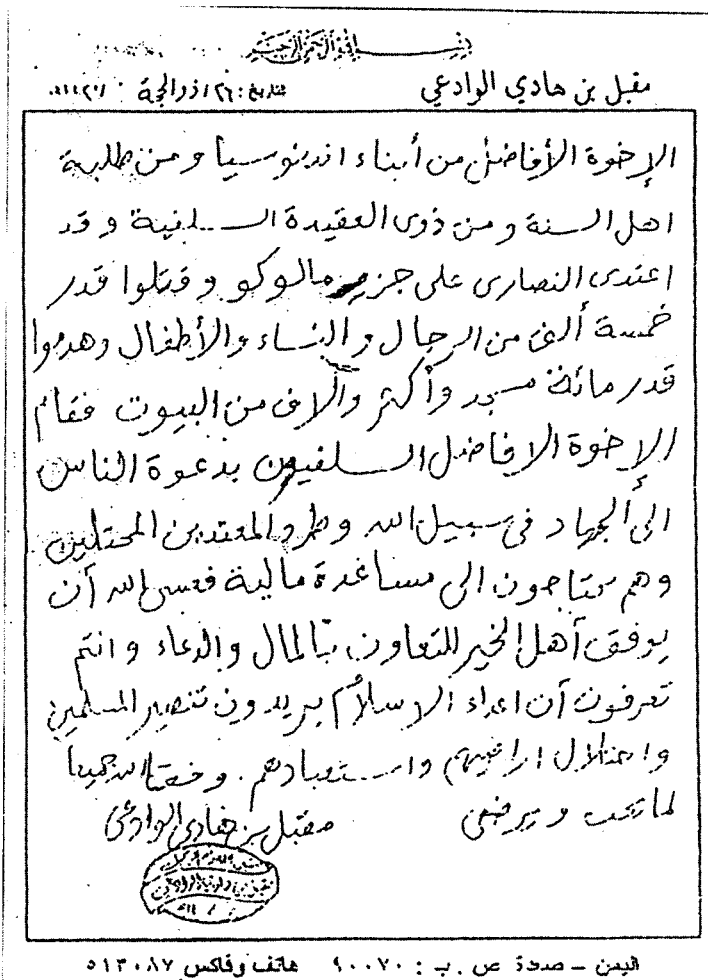


Figure VIII: The Fatwa of Muqbil Ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i on the obligation of all Muslims to participate in jihad in the Moluccas, which I copied from a file in Laskar Jihad's possession.

Although these fatwas insisted on the defensive nature of jihad, and thereby confirmed the absence of a Qur'anic sanction for permanent violence or for violence that is not structured to achieve a designated end, they could be used to clarify the possible benefits that violence sometimes brings in a certain context. If the Salafi recruits believed that they were part of God's army fighting a jihad against the forces of evil, they could tell themselves that the end justified the means. In a situation when Muslims are perceived to be engaged in the battle against the "Zionist-Christian forces seeking to undermine Islam and the Muslim *umma*," violent jihad is not only legitimate, but also obligatory as one aspect of a holy war to defend Islam.

While affirming the defensive nature of jihad, the fatwas mentioned some requisite conditions. As prescribed by al-Wadi'i, for instance, the Salafis must have the necessary military strength to wage a jihad, and the jihad should be waged in the name of defending the Sunna, not for the benefit of any political parties. In addition,

jihad is not allowed if it incites physical violence among Muslims themselves or creates the impression that those engaged in it want political power.¹⁰¹ These prerequisites might be crucial in distinguishing jihad in the Moluccas from the Salafi-jihadis' international jihad movement, which acquired legitimacy through the Afghan War. During the war, Salafis worldwide gave increasing attention to the concept of jihad popularized by 'Abd Allah 'Azzam, which advocates armed struggle against outside forces, such as state powers or tyrannical armies. After the war ended and the volunteers returned to their home countries, their fervor to conduct jihad continued to burn. Their unflagging eagerness to fight was particularly intensified when they heard about the miseries afflicting Muslims in other trouble spots like Kashmir, the Southern Philippines, Bosnia, and Chechnya. They argued that it is obligatory to wage jihad to liberate these regions from the invasion of the enemies of Islam, as had been done in Afghanistan.¹⁰²

The present Salafi authorities, in Saudi Arabia particularly and in other Gulf countries generally, faced a delicate problem in connection with questions concerning global jihad. On the one hand, they did not want to undermine their position as defenders of Muslims against attacks by belligerent infidels. On the other hand, they needed to defend themselves against Bin Laden's criticism that they had been complicit with America. Hence, in addition to supporting the dispatch of Salafi volunteers to wage jihad in trouble spots like Kashmir and Bosnia, they were attempting to develop a counter-discourse that would answer the challenge posed by Bin Laden. It is no surprise that a number of prominent Salafi authorities, including Bin Baz, al-Albani, and al-'Uthaymin, were happy to issue fatwas encouraging the presence of volunteers in those regions. But it should be noted that they insisted jihad is only allowed in pursuit of defensive goals, thereby undermining the position of the Salafi-jihadis associated with Bin Laden, the successor of 'Azzam, who broadened the meaning of jihad to include a permanent armed struggle against any campaigns of oppression carried out by infidels, such as the so-called "Judeo-Crusader" coalition led by the United States.¹⁰³

Their ambiguity notwithstanding, the fatwas facilitated the attempts of Indonesian Salafis to present their causes to a much broader audience: the transnational Muslim community, or *umma*. The solidarity of sympathetic Muslims across the world, particularly in the transnational network of Salafis, inspired them to make their calls for jihad in the Moluccas resonate more loudly. Transnational solidarity is vital to a movement that lacks solid bases in domestic social networks. The shift in venues might stimulate the involvement of new or more sympathetic actors to their cause. In the struggle of a group to mount collective action, this form of solidarity also has the potential to become an effective instrument in providing self-confidence and a strong sense of identity among the movement's participants. In the meantime, it can improve the bargaining position of the group in relation to the government authorities or other movements, especially when the access of claimants to domestic power is blocked, or where those making claims are too weak politically for their voices to be heard.

¹⁰¹ See the fatwa of al-Wadi'i in Thalib, "Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa," pp. 8-9.

¹⁰² Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 8,4 (December 2001): 24.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Perhaps more importantly, through the fatwas the Salafis sought to gain access to new kinds of resources across borders that would guarantee the success of their collective action. These are no different from the types of resources that might be mobilized at a domestic level, such as political support, recruits, and money. But the symbolic significance of these resources is much greater than the domestic ones, because they may shore up both the group's sense of the righteousness of their struggle. Without the fatwas, nothing can be hoped for from these types of resources. The fatwas could at least be expected to serve as a bridge facilitating communication between the movement's actors and people with an ideological affinity from different countries such as Saudi Arabia, who were possibly interested in assisting the Indonesian activists. For the Indonesian Salafis, as part of the transnational network of the *da'wa* movement sponsored by Saudi Arabia, financial (and other) support from the state or related institutions and individuals had so far proved crucial to undertaking their activities.

STRUCTURES OF MOBILIZATION

Social movements do not depend on framing alone; they must bring people together in the field and assure their own future after the exhilaration of mobilization has passed. In this respect, the very existence of FKAJ was crucial for the Salafi campaign in its efforts to recruit and dispatch voluntary fighters. This organization can be seen as a transformed aspect, a sturdy offshoot, of the Salafi informal social network rooted in numerous centers of Salafi activism, as shown above. In contrast to that network, the FKAJ organization was characterized by a strong, formal, hierarchical, and bureaucratic structure. This kind of organization functions perfectly as a means through which actors in a social movement can communicate their messages to certain targeted audiences. As clearly suggested by William Gamson in his seminal study of collective action, a formal centralized, bureaucratic organization constitutes the most effective mechanism for the success of a social movement because it provides readily available sources of labor, efficient decision-making structures, and a high degree of "combat readiness."¹⁰⁴

The effectiveness and consequent importance of FKAJ was particularly a result of its hierarchical, bureaucratic decision-making structure, which incorporated the primary personal attributes of members into the pursuit of collective goals in a way that evoked the underlying bonds of community. It served as what Mario Diani calls a "connective structure," linking leaders and followers, center and periphery, and different parts of the movement sector.¹⁰⁵ The presence of this connective structure was instrumental to guaranteeing that the messages and symbols conveyed by movement actors through the process of frame alignment could reach targeted audiences.

In fact, through FKAJ, the messages Thalib and other organization leaders wanted to convey were quickly disseminated to the small units of membership throughout the network and other aspirant *mujahidin*, reaching remote areas in the countryside. But these messages were first received and managed by the Salafi *ustadhs* (religious teachers) responsible for the development of the units. In this

¹⁰⁴ William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁵ Mario Diani, *A Structural Analysis of the Italian Environmental Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

sense, the position of the *ustadhs* was decisive, for they acted as intermediaries who exerted a direct influence on their disciples. In FKAJ's campaign to mobilize fighters, these teachers were part of the frontline. Their loyalty support of Thalib would be crucial in determining whether his calls for jihad in the Moluccas would be successful.

As a formal organization, FKAJ had a relatively modern structure, topped by its Central Executive Board (Dewan Pimpinan Pusat, DPP). Its headquarters were located in Yogyakarta, under the same roof as the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah. Under this board, there were five divisions, including the Financial Division, Social Division, Health Division, Information Division, and Special Force (*Pasukan Khusus*), which was charged with special duties responsible for the success of achieving organization goals. The best cadres were recruited to fill board positions and served as the organization's backbone, spending much of their time planning events, making predictions about consequences, and organizing programs of action. The most important figure among them was Ayip Syafruddin, the chairman of board, who supervised division chiefs and members. In fact, he was the man who proposed the concept of FKAJ and outlined how the Forum would operate.

Born in Cirebon, Syafruddin was a graduate of the Psychology Faculty at the Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta. His interest in Islamic activism grew in his first year at the university. He had been involved in the NII movement before deciding to join in Salafi activism. He claimed that the inspiration to establish FKAJ came from his discussions with a number of Islamist leaders, notably Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sudjana.¹⁰⁶ As the leaders of KISDI and PPML, respectively, both had experience in organizing mass action. In several meetings, they shared insights about the art of mobilization that helped Syafruddin perform his main duty as FKAJ chairman. He also played a role as a negotiator, lobbying "important personalities" in Jakarta and other cities. He was assisted in this task by Ma'ruf Bahrin, the general secretary of the organization. Like Syafruddin, before joining Thalib's activities, this engineering graduate of the Agriculture Faculty of Haluuleo University, Palu, Central Sulawesi, had also been a follower of the NII movement.¹⁰⁷

Above the central executive board, there was an advisory body, a supreme religious board led by Thalib and comprised of eighty-four Salafi *ustadhs* scattered all over Indonesia. This advisory board had several commissions, including a fatwa commission, a training commission, a public relations commission, and a foreign affairs commission. It was responsible for such tasks as the appointment and removal of FKAJ's central executive board members. In practice, the advisory board became a highly powerful body, with authority to define all the general policies of FKAJ.¹⁰⁸ In addition to Thalib and as-Sewed, the supreme religious board included Abu Munzir Zul Akmal, Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain, and Lukman Ba'abduh. As disciples of al-Wadi'i, they are widely influential among Indonesian Salafis.

The central executive board coordinated provincial (Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah, DPW) and district (Dewan Pimpinan Daerah, DPD) branches. There were ten provincial and more than forty district branches scattered throughout Sumatra, Java,

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Jakarta, November 2001.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Ma'ruf Bahrin, Jakarta, November 2001.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad, Yogyakarta, November 2001.

Bali, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi.¹⁰⁹ In addition, there were several branches set up later, including those in the Moluccas and Papua. Interestingly, FKAJW claimed also to have several representatives abroad, including Australia, Yemen, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Utilizing its structural command links, FKAJW mobilized thousands of jihad volunteers all over Indonesia and published and distributed *Maluku Hari Ini* (The Moluccas Today), a free two-page pamphlet of up-to-date information reinforcing its own version of the Moluccan conflict. This pamphlet later developed into the *Buletin Laskar Jihad [Ahlu Sunnah wal Jama'ah]*, a sixteen-page color bulletin that included photographs of Muslims allegedly massacred by Christians. It also established a website at laskarjihad.org/or.id that was regularly updated. In this project, support from the activist cadres experienced with campus media and university student organizations was crucial.

Simultaneously, FKAJW produced stickers, T-shirts, emblems, recorded sermons, and books exalting the magnificence of jihad for mass consumption. These emerged as symbols that embellished the identity of the group and served as commodified emblems of violence. Consumption of these symbols in turn structured channels of participation. The role of symbols as vehicles for representation has been emphasized by cultural anthropologists. Symbols create or constitute the system of meaning that "make up" culture. In this sense, symbols have the capability of determining how different aspects of life are conceptualized and experienced by participants in a culture, that is, how individuals in that culture construct their world.¹¹⁰

Registered volunteers were obliged to undergo physical and mental training organized by the branches of FKAJW, during which they were instilled with fervor for jihad. Under the instruction of *ustadhs* of the advisory body, they were required to read chapters discussing jihad in different classical Islamic books, particularly the *Bulugh al-Maram* (Attainment of the Objective) of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (1372-1449) and *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Provisions of the Hereafter) of Muhammad ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350). In this way, units of volunteer fighters whose membership ranged from between fifty to five hundred people were formed in every branch. In the Tawangmangu meeting in March 2000, these units of recruits made an agreement to unite themselves into Laskar Jihad.

¹⁰⁹ These include DPW Banyumas, DPW Jakarta and environs, DPW West Java, DPW Central Java, DPW East Java, DPW Kalimantan, DPW Riau, DPW North Sumatra, DPW Sulawesi, and DPW Yogyakarta. DPW Banyumas supervised DPD Banjar Negara, Cilacap, Kebumen, Purbalingga, Purwokerto, and Wonosobo. DPW Jakarta supervised DPD Bangka-Belitung, Jakarta, Kotabumi, Metro, and Tangerang. DPW West Java supervised DPD Bandung, Cirebon, Indramayu, and Kuningan. DPW Central Java supervised DPD Brebes, Pekalongan, Pemalang, Semarang, and Tegal. DPW East Java supervised DPD Surabaya, Jombang, Jember, Madiun, Magetan, Malang, and Bali. DPW Kalimantan supervised DPD Banjarmasin and Balikpapan. DPW Riau supervised DPD Batam, Jambi, Padang, and Pekanbaru. DPW North Sumatra supervised DPD Medan, Batubara, and Langkat. DPW Sulawesi supervised DPD Makassar, Bau-Bau, and Kendari. DPW Yogyakarta supervised DPD Bantul, Klaten, Magelang, and Surakarta.

¹¹⁰ See Margot L. Lyon, "Missing Emotion: The Limitation of Cultural Constructionism in the Study of Emotion," *Cultural Anthropology* 10,2 (May 1995): 244-63.



Figure IX: The *Maluku Hari Ini*: an effective tool to communicate Salafi messages.

Although Laskar Jihad had been established, the existence of FKAJW remained crucial. As an umbrella organization for the former, the FKAJW was responsible for organizing and financing the dispatch of all jihad fighters. Through its social division, it was even required to provide financial support for the families of recruits left behind at home. To fulfill these tasks, FKAJW needed a large amount of money. It claimed to have collected money through two systems of fundraising: (1) self-support from organization members in the form of basic and incidental contributions; (2) donations from money collected in mosques, at intersections, and at traffic lights. FKAJW emphasized that the bulk of its financial support was derived from these donations; a list of these gifts was proudly published in the monthly *Salafy* and on the Laskar Jihad website. According to the chairman of the Financial Division of FKAJW, more than 50 percent of Laskar Jihad's operational budget came from such donations.¹¹¹

In April 2000, as it was preparing to dispatch Laskar Jihad fighters to the Moluccas, young men standing at intersections and holding boxes labeled "Contribution for jihad in the Moluccas" became a common sight in cities where FKAJW branches had been established. In Yogyakarta alone, one could witness hundreds of members of what FKAJW called the "Pasukan Ngencleng"—a Javanese expression meaning a task-force whose job is to collect money in the streets. In this city, FKAJW rented a large house to provide temporary accommodations for the Pasukan Ngencleng, whose number multiplied on Fridays, when they stood before mosques waiting to profit from the generosity of people coming out of the Friday services.

¹¹¹ Interviews with Ma'ruf Bahrun and Yustanto Dwiyanoro, Jakarta, October 2001.



Figure X: Stickers aimed at inciting Salafis to wage jihad in the Moluccas, stating that death is a certainty, it cannot be moved forward or back by jihad.

As far as I was able to observe, however, FKAWJ did not, in fact, collect much money from the streets. The members of the Pasukan Ngencleng received only coins of small denomination or notes with a value ranging from a hundred to a thousand rupiah from one out of every thousand people. If such a widespread public fundraising effort garnered such modest amounts, where was the rest of the money coming from? FKAWJ did not deny having received a much larger amount of money from secret donors who did not want their names to be publicized. In this category, the Indonesian military and high-ranking military officials are believed to have donated a significant amount of money.¹¹² Nor were such donations confined to the military. Fuad Bawazier, the former Minister of Finance associated with al-Irsyad and known to maintain fairly close ties with the Suharto family, was mentioned as one of the most important civilian donors. Some well-known politicians were also said to have contributed a significant amount. Irrefutably, FKAWJ also received donations from affluent businessmen in Jakarta, Solo, Pekalongan, Tegal, and Surabaya.

¹¹² Eko Prasetyo, *Membela Agama Tuhan: Potret Gerakan Islam dalam Pusaran Konflik Global* (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2002), p. 218; see also R. Huang, "In the Spotlight: Laskar Jihad," *Terrorism Project* (Washington DC: Center for Defense Information, 2002).

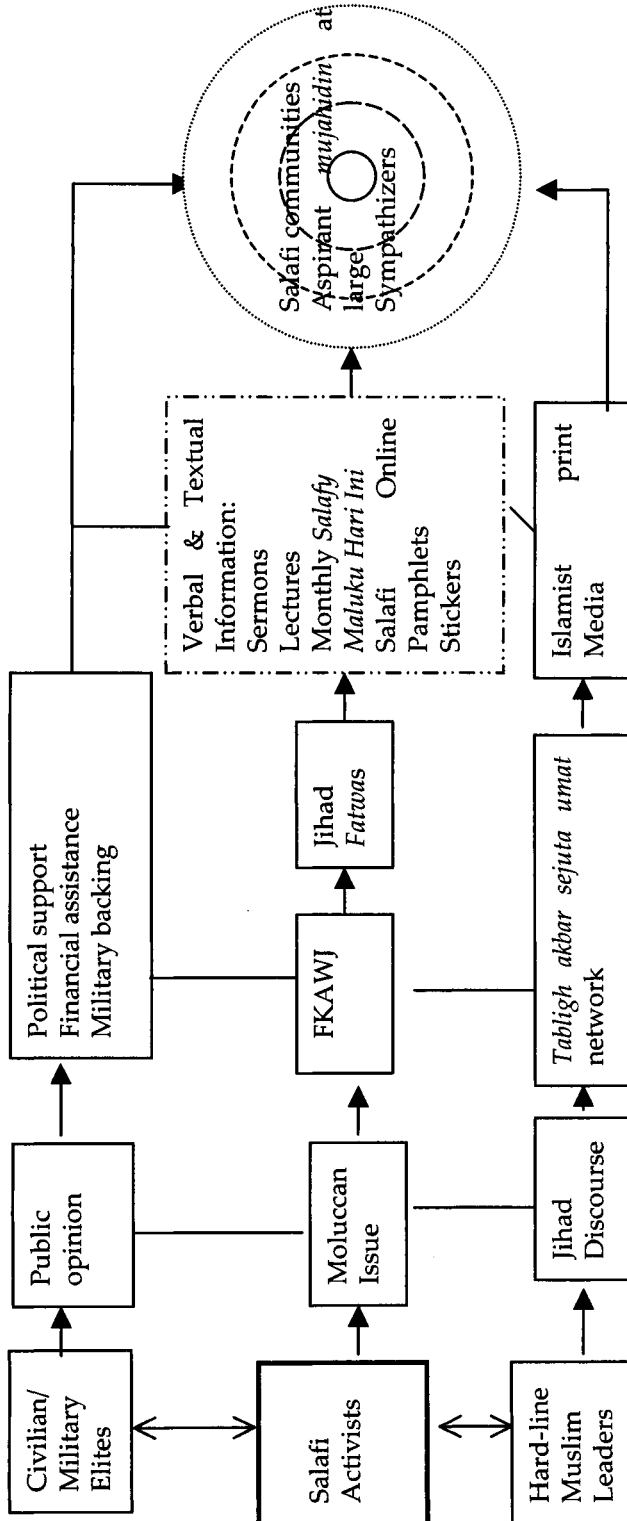
FKAWJ also did not deny having received financial support from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Australia, the United States, and the Gulf states.¹¹³ Its activists claimed to have mobilized financial support abroad by persuading important personalities in the transnational Salafi *da'wa* network to support their cause.¹¹⁴ Thalib himself frankly acknowledged that he had received 700,000,000 rupiah from foreign donors before the dispatch of his fighters at the end of April 2000. He specifically mentioned Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Congress of New Jersey as the two most important sources in the success of initial Laskar Jihad operations.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Interview with Hardiyanto, Jakarta, December 2000.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Idral Haris, Solo, February 2003.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, www.astaga.com, interview, April 13, 2000; Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Pemberontakan Kristen Ambon Masih Berlangsung," *Suara Hidayatullah*, interview, 8,13 (December 2001): 15; "Sumber Dana Kaum Bergamis," *Gamma* (May 19, 2002).

Figure XI: Diagram of Jihad Mobilization



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CHAPTER FOUR

FROM APOLITICAL SALAFISM TO JIHADIST ACTIVISM

The determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas required the Indonesian Salafis associated with Ja'far Umar Thalib to make some adjustments in their ideological discourse. Under the auspices of Laskar Jihad, they seemed no longer hesitant about emphasizing the necessity of fulfilling the duty of jihad and discussing its significance for the struggle of the Muslim *umma*. They asserted that jihad is not only vital to save Islam from the aggression and intimidation of the West-Zionist global conspiracy led by the United States, but also essential if the lost glory of Islam is to be revived. In their view, jihad thus constitutes the only way to solve the problems afflicting Muslims today and to uphold the dignity of Islam. They underscored the conviction that to die in jihad is the highest form of sacrifice that can be performed by faithful Muslims, and those who make this sacrifice will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven.

The jihad discourse that has developed among Laskar Jihad fighters exemplifies a successful amalgamation of doctrinaire-revivalist ideas and a militant battle cry. This is apparently related to the fact that, as we have seen in the previous chapters, members of Laskar Jihad constitute part of a larger "apolitical" Salafi *da'wa* community. Their ideology is therefore irrevocably associated with the basic Salafi doctrinal positions that stress the need to return to "pure" Islam while emphasizing the supremacy of the *shari'a* and the Sunna. It is necessary in this chapter to pose the question of how this sort of ideology has been formed and developed and to what extent it has contributed to the Salafis' commitment to jihad in the Moluccas.

By ideology, I mean a system of beliefs, ideas, values, and meanings that reflects the moral, social, and political interests and commitments of a particular group and out of which that group creates an understanding of how the world should work.¹ Teun A. van Dijk argues that, as a system of belief, ideology should be understood in terms of the "triangle" of (social) cognition, society, and discourse. From his point of view, ideology not only represents group identity and interests, but also defines group cohesion and organizes joint action and interactions that optimally realize group goals.² David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford highlight the dynamics of ideology in relation to the struggle of movement actors over the production of ideas and meanings. These scholars are of the opinion that ideology does not function as a vehicle for extant ideas and meanings that flow statically from the movement's

¹ There are abundant definitions of ideology, some of which have a pejorative connotation. For a relatively neutral definition, see Sinisa Malesevic, "Rehabilitating Ideology after Poststructuralism," in *Ideology after Poststructuralism*, ed. Ian MacKenzie and Sinisa Malesevic (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

² Teun A. van Dijk, *Ideology: a Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 26-27.

underlying doctrines, but rather as an interactive process that involves the movement's actors.³

Some social theorists have cautioned scholars to heed the role ideology plays in collective action. An important contribution of William Gamson on ideological packages, for instance, indicates how effectively ideological symbols are able to mobilize opinion. He argues that ideology includes core elements that provide an underlying, assumed framework that transcends specific issues and suggests larger world-views.⁴ While recognizing the cultural and interpretative function of ideology, Kenneth Tucker likewise emphasizes its instrumental and political functions. He considers ideology as a cultural system of meanings that defines resources and opportunities, fosters political culture, and promotes collective identity and solidarity.⁵ Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston have even noted that ideology is much more important than framing, because it is able to address the much deeper and complex meanings that framing cannot. In other words, ideology captures the beliefs and ideas of actors the way framing does not.⁶

BACK TO THE QUR'AN AND SUNNA

The world-view of the Salafis is predicated upon the tradition of *tajdid* and *islah*, usually translated as "renewal" and "reform," respectively. The underlying theme of this tradition represents the individual and communal effort to attempt to define Islam clearly and explicitly in terms of God's revelation (the Qur'an) and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad.⁷ In this tradition, the Salafis claim to have one primary concern: to urge a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna in accordance with the understanding and example set by the *Salaf al-Salih* (pious ancestors).⁸ The necessity to call for a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna is emphasized since they believe that the Muslim *umma* had failed to avoid various forms of polytheism (*shirk*), reprehensible innovation (*bid'a*), and superstition (*khurafa*).⁹ From their point of view, these deviations may have occurred because of Muslims' neglect of the true Islam as taught by the *Salaf al-Salih*, which they consider to be the purist form of Islam.¹⁰

The Salafis believe that the discord, conflicts, political instability, and economic turmoil that afflict Muslim countries today stem from their failure to follow the example of the *Salaf al-Salih*. They are convinced that such neglect is a serious mistake, which results in Muslims' failure to anticipate the intrigues of unbelievers.

³ David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. A. D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 136.

⁴ William A. Gamson, "Political Discourse and Collective Action," in *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movements Across Cultures*, ed. B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi and S. Tarrow (Greenwich, CT: International Social Movement Research, JAI Press, 1988), pp. 219-46.

⁵ Kenneth H. Tucker, "Ideological and Social Movements: The Contribution of Habermas," *Sociological Inquiry* 59 (1989): 30-48.

⁶ Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston, "What a Good Idea: Ideologies and Frames in Social Movement Research," *Mobilization* 5,1 (2000): 37-54.

⁷ John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 32.

⁸ "Assalamu'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh," editorial notes, *Salafy* 1 (1995): 1.

⁹ Salih ibn Ghanim al-Sadlan, "Fiqhul Waqi': Penyakit dan Obatnya," *Salafy* 3 (1996): 18.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Salim al-Hilali, "Mengapa Harus Manhaj Salaf?" *Salafy* 1 (1995): 3.

Commenting on the contemporary situation, Ja'far Umar Thalib, the leading ideologue among the Indonesian Salafis, essentially made this point in his introductory notes to the first issue of the periodical *Salafy*:

The Muslim *umma* have constantly been faced with various troublesome challenges. Following the *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, the straight path, in a consistent manner seems convoluted. Followers of the Sunna are dismissed by the government, which has promoted the followers of the *bid'a* to be its collaborators. Moreover, the followers of the Sunna are treated as outcasts by society: they are neglected, discredited, condemned. Answering this is the biggest challenge facing the Muslim *umma* today.¹¹

Thalib is convinced that, with a return to the absolute truth of Islam, elements and influences that have corrupted Muslim religious beliefs and practices will automatically be eradicated. This, in turn, will revive the "original, pure and true Islam," a consummation deemed to be a prerequisite for the recovery of Islam's former glory.¹²

In their call for a return to "pristine, ideal Islam," the Salafis place a particular emphasis on the revival of the Sunna. The position of the Sunna in Islamic orthodoxy is indubitably central, not only as a guide for understanding the Qur'an, but also as an independent doctrinal source second to the Qur'an. Al-Albani, a prominent authority among Salafis worldwide and specialist in the Prophetic Traditions, underlined the vital position of the Sunna, pointing out that attachment to the Sunna necessarily involves commitment to the defense of the faith and advancement on the path to salvation, steering the Muslim *umma* away from deviations and corruptions.¹³ Elaborating on al-Albani's opinion, Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, another important ideologue among the Indonesian Salafis, considers the attempt to revive the Sunna to be a crucial task, as he contends that the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad has been neglected.¹⁴ Thalib therefore calls the Salafis "the people of the Prophetic Traditions" (*Ahl al-Hadith*), defined as those who consistently rely on authentic *hadiths*—reliable accounts of the actions of Muhammad and his companions relayed through the valid chains of transmission—and practice them in their everyday lives.¹⁵ He refers to an article by al-Albani, who emphasized that the Salafis can claim to have belonged to the so-called saved sect (*firqa najiya*) or the assisted group (*ta'ifa mansura*) precisely because of their commitment to internalizing the authentic *hadiths*.¹⁶

As demarcated by the Salafis, the *Salaf al-Salih* were comprised exclusively of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*Sahaba*) (the first generation of Muslims), their followers (*Tabi'in*) (the second generation of Muslims), and those who came directly after the *Tabi'in* (*Tabi'u al-Tabi'in*). These people are thought to provide the

¹¹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan," *Salafy* 1 (1995): 42.

¹² Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Fitnah Sururiyah Memecah-belah Umat," *Salafy* 2 (1996): 18; see also Abdul Mu'thi, "Dakwah Salafiyah Menjawab Problematik Umat," *Salafy* 5 (1996): 12-13.

¹³ Muhammad Nasr al-Din al-Albani, "Kedudukan As-Sunnah dalam Islam," *Salafy* 13 (1997): 20-26.

¹⁴ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Membela Sunah Nabawiyyah," *Salafy* 13 (1997): 27-36.

¹⁵ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

¹⁶ See Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, "Mengapa Kita Harus Memakai Nama Salafi?" *Salafy* 1 (1995): 8-10.

best model for the Islamic way of life because their understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna are believed to have been acquired under the direct guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. In the opinion of as-Sewed, to follow the *Salaf al-Salih* means to submit to the absolute truth as set out in the Qur'an and the Sunna; he believes that this will lead a person to steer clear of mistakes and protect him or her from sins and evil acts.¹⁷

The degree of loyalty shown in following the Qur'an and Sunna in accordance with the ideas and the examples of the *Salaf al-Salih* will define whether a person can be called a Muslim or not, Muhammad Ihsan, one early follower of Thalib, claims.¹⁸ Accordingly, a Muslim has no option but to become a Salafi, meaning one who follows the *Salaf al-Salih*. In the opinion of Idral Haris, Thalib's disciple, who had the opportunity to study with Muqbil in Yemen, a Salafi adherent is attached to a group that has been guaranteed success, victory, and salvation because it has kept aloof from any behavior or doctrine that has deviated from the "original, true Islam."¹⁹ This is what al-Hilali, another prominent Middle Eastern Salafi authority, refers to as either "the traditional method" (*Manhaj Salafi*) or "the method of the followers of the Prophet's Traditions" (*Manhaj Ahl al-Hadith/Sunna*).²⁰

For the sake of the glory of Islam, the Salafis insist on the necessity of *da'wa*, meaning that Muslims should be made aware of various corruptions that may have clouded their religious beliefs and practices. Abu Ishak, another Thalib disciple sent to study with Muqbil in Yemen, states that *da'wa* is the primary, requisite obligation of any Muslim.²¹ In this connection, Thalib has explicitly outlined four main aims of the Salafi *da'wa*, which include:

1. To teach human beings in general and Muslims in particular about true Islam, by referring to the comprehensive principles of belief, in order to answer all problems facing the *umma*;
2. To purify various corruptions marring Muslim beliefs and practices, which are the outcome of the infiltration of the elements of reprehensible innovations (*bid'a*) and infidelity (*kufr*), by debating such beliefs and practices and explaining their fallacy;
3. To revive the practices of the Prophet Muhammad, which had been neglected by the *umma*, and to strengthen practices prevailing in the *umma* in accordance with the Prophet's guidance;
4. To disseminate the message of solidarity and unity of the *umma* on the basis of its loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, called *al-wala*, and hostility towards heresy and infidelity, known as *al-bara*.²²

Some dedicated followers of Thalib, including Syafruddin and Bahrin, chairman and secretary of the central executive board of FKAWJ, respectively, claim that the Salafi *da'wa* is distinctly different from the *da'wa* of other Islamic movements as it is

¹⁷ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Mengenal Para Imam Ahlussunnah, Ashabul Hadits," *Salafy* 4 (1996): 10-14.

¹⁸ Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

¹⁹ Interview with Idral Haris, Solo, January 2003.

²⁰ Al-Hilali, "Mengapa Harus Manhaj Salaf?" p. 3.

²¹ Interview with Muslim Abu Ishak, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

²² Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan," p. 39.

built upon three main principles. They are (1) to establish the prominence of the Sunna of the Prophet; (2) to provide a direct example for society; and (3) to advocate the purity of *tawhid*.²³ Abdul Mu'thi, one of the most prolific writers among the Indonesian Salafis and also Thalib's disciple, has stigmatized other *da'wa* groups that he claims have not based their activities on these principles, identifying them as dangerous groups trapped in Satanic *da'wa*. In his writing, he deplores the existence of the groups, which he and his fellow Salafis accuse of being preoccupied with political and other non-fundamental issues.²⁴ Muhammad Musa Nasr, another Salafi writer, insists that giving priority to politics, while neglecting the necessity to strive for the Sunna and eliminate all forms of *bid'a*, is a mistake.²⁵ As-Sewed adds that the neglect of the Sunna has resulted in fragmentations and enduring conflicts among Muslims.²⁶

TAWHID

The very core of the Salafis' doctrine is *tawhid*, meaning to accept and believe in the oneness of God and His absolute authority. In their conception, *tawhid* is divided into three branches: *tawhid 'ubudiyya* (unity of worship); *tawhid rububiyya* (unity of lordship); and *tawhid al-asma wa'l-sifat* (unity of Allah's names and attributes). The *tawhid 'ubudiyya* teaches that a true servant of Allah must single out Allah in all acts of worship and He alone should be worshiped with complete and utter loyalty. The *tawhid rububiyya* implies that a faithful Muslim must accept that Allah is the Creator of all things and sovereignty over believers belongs only to Him. The *tawhid al-asma wa'l-sifat* means that a faithful Muslim believes in Allah's names and attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and the authentic Sunna, in accordance to their literal Arabic meanings, without denying any of these attributes or likening them to the attributes of His creation.²⁷

The Salafis maintain that these three branches of *tawhid* are inseparable from one another because they are the pillars of a Muslim's creed (*shahada*) of "*La ilaha illa Allah*" (There is no God but Allah), in the sense that to declare "*La ilaha illa Allah*" entails a total submission to God. Given this testimony, they are convinced that in all aspects of life, a faithful Muslim has no option but to submit to God. Consequently, according to as-Sewed, the essence of *tawhid* is a total submission to God, proved by a person's sincere determination to implement all of His commands and scrupulously avoid all of His prohibitions.²⁸ Ahmad Hamdani, another prolific writer among Thalib's followers, has pointed out that "To declare '*La ilaha illa Allah*' is not a guarantee that will bring a Muslim to heaven, and this declaration is useless without knowledge, understanding, conviction, and implementation of all of its meanings in real life."²⁹ Submission to God, therefore, is not a personal or public act, but the focal point that controls all aspects of Muslim lives. As a result, the

²³ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin and Ma'ruf Bahrin, Jakarta, October 2001.

²⁴ Abdul Mu'thi, "Dakwah Salafiyah Dakwah yang Haq," *Salafy* 3 (1996): 10-15.

²⁵ Muhammad Musa Nasr, "Fitnahnya Dakwah Syaitan," *Salafy* 3 (1996): 20-23.

²⁶ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

²⁷ Thalib, "Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan," p. 39. See also Zainul Arifin An-Nawawi, "Pembagian Tauhid Menurut Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah," *Salafy* 13 (1997): 37-41.

²⁸ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

²⁹ Ahmad Hamdani, "Hakekat Tauhid," *Salafy* 20 (1997): 35-40

distinction between the personal and the public is replaced by the distinction between the religious and the non-religious.

In order to maintain the purity of Muslim beliefs and practices, the Salafis strongly condemn whatever they regard as deviation from the principles of *tawhid*. For example, they reject *taqlid* (blind imitation), saying that it implies a submission to something other than God. In this relation, they are in total opposition to the *madhhab* (a school of Islamic law), suggesting that the opinions of the *madhhab* are deficient in Qur'anic and Sunna references, and those who follow them are not faithful Muslims. They likewise reject *ijma'*, consensus, and *qiyas*, analogy, claiming that all religious matters must be resolved in the light of authentic *hadiths*. Interestingly, they are also not in favor of *ijtihad*, independent legal reasoning, as advocated by Muslim reformists. As stated by Hardi Ibnu Harun and Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad, both of whom were members of FKAJ's central executive board, *ijtihad* involves reason, which should play no role in religious matters.³⁰ Within this context, Thalib criticizes Muhammad 'Abduh and even Rashid Rida, whose thinking is deemed to have been contaminated by the so-called *Bid'a Mu'tazila*, religious ideas propounded by the Mu'tazilites, a rationalist sect of Islam, to such an extent that they have eclipsed the importance of the Sunna.³¹

The Salafi discourse on *tawhid* parallels that of prominent Islamist ideologues in some ways. Abul A'la al-Mawdudi, for instance, saw *tawhid* as the sole objective of the faith in the sense that Islam is revealed to teach human beings total obedience and submission to God. A faithful Muslim, Mawdudi argued, is not someone who simply abides by the teachings of Islam, but someone who accepts obedience and submission to God totally. From his point of view, active submission to God by individual Muslims is a pledge of their good faith and resolve to implement the teachings of Islam comprehensively in all aspects of life, and this constitutes a prerequisite for the establishment of the ideal Islamic order.³²

Like Mawdudi, Qutb made *tawhid* the basic fact and component of the Islamic creed. For him, total submission to God is the actual meaning of Islam. Having accepted this principle, Qutb rejected any rule and system composed by human beings, and, simultaneously, asserted the comprehensiveness of Islam. In this light, it is not surprising that he classified those individuals who regulate their life and behavior in accord with the divine creed as the followers of the divine religion. But those individuals who derive their system of government from a king, a prince, a tribe, or a people constitute followers of a man-made religion.³³ He assured his followers that God is the only ruler, the only legislator, and the only organizer of human life and relationships. Hence, all guidance and legislation, all systems of life, norms governing relationships and measures of values are derived from Him alone.³⁴

³⁰ Interview with Hardi Ibnu Harun and Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad, Jakarta, October 2000.

³¹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Perkembangan Pemikiran Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Ridlo," *Salafy* 31 (1999): 42-48.

³² Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, NY, and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 57-58.

³³ Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992), pp. 70-73.

³⁴ Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, p. 77.

The central position of *tawhid* is an equally crucial concept among Shi'ites, the greatest ideological opponents of the Salafis. Ali Shariati, one of the most influential Shi'ite thinkers, viewed *tawhid* as the principle that guarantees justice on the earth; the total submission to God implied by the doctrine of *tawhid* necessitates that the oppressor cease to abuse the oppressed. The mission and objective of *tawhid*, he claimed, were solely to reinstate freedom, equality and classlessness through the destruction of the trials of wealth, political power and religion.³⁵ Shariati was even convinced that *tawhid* provides the foundation of the creation of harmony in human life:

The very structure of *tawhid* cannot accept contradiction or disharmony in the world ... Contradiction between nature and meta-nature ... science and religion, metaphysics and nature, working for men and working for God, politics and religion ... all these forms of contradiction are reconcilable only with the worldview of shirk—dualism, trinitarianism or polytheism—but not with *tawhid*—monotheism.³⁶

The most important aspect that should be stressed here is that while emphasizing the importance of *tawhid* as the pillar of Islam, the Salafis seek to eliminate its political meaning. Their discussions on this subject focus mainly on the division of *tawhid* into *tawhid 'uluhiyya*, *tawhid rububiyya*, and *tawhid al-asma wa'l-sifat* in reference to classical debates of Muslim philosophers on God. Thalib and as-Sewed are convinced that to believe in these three branches of *tawhid* means to be free from polytheistic and corrupting innovative elements, and that such devotion would totally guarantee the faith of a Muslim, on the basis of which a truly Islamic life can be built.³⁷

AHL AL-SUNNA WA'L-JAMA`A

The Salafis maintain that the method by which they understand Islam is identical to the method of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, who are understood to be followers of the Sunna of the Prophet and the first generation of Muslims (*Salaf al-Salih*) and all the communities who attach themselves to them.³⁸ As-Sewed emphasizes that to be considered the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, Muslims should consistently follow all the instructions prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions and join a community that practices his Sunna consistently.³⁹ In the opinion of Abdurrahman Wonosari, another important graduate of the Ihyaus Sunnah sent by Thalib to study with al-Wadi'i in Yemen and also member of FKAWJ's advisory council, the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* is the only saved group. Hence, a Muslim has no choice but to

³⁵ See Ali Rahnama, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), p. 290.

³⁶ Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), p. 86.

³⁷ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

³⁸ Concerning the Salafis' definition of the *ahl al-Sunna wa'l-jama'a*, see Abdul Mu'thi As-Salafy, "Memerangi Dakwah Hizbiyyah," *Salafy* 9 (1996): 12-14.

³⁹ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

associate with that group. As a basis for this interpretation, he refers to a tradition of the Prophet stating that after his own age had passed Muslims would split into seventy-three groups, all of which would go to hell except one, the group that had consistently observed the Sunna of the Prophet and the community of his followers.⁴⁰

In scholarly debates, the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, as a group, is also called Sunni Islam, or Islam of the Sunna, which constitutes the orthodox school of this religion. Followers of this branch of Islam are therefore frequently defined as "those who refrain from deviating from orthodox dogma and practice." In light of their rigid adherence to the interpretation of Islam by the *Salaf al-Salih*, whom they consider to be the true defenders of the Islamic faith, the followers of Sunni Islam are also thought of as traditionalists. The term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* itself is an expression generally used in opposition to Shi'ite Islam.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, this term was born in the early formative period of Islam, in the context of political tensions occurring at that time. It was explored in even more depth by the so-called *Ahl al-Hadith*, those who sought direct references in the text of the Qur'an and Sunna on matters of religion, in the face of the challenge posed by the *Ahl al-Ra'y*, those who tended to rely on intellectual speculations. The former were known as *al-salaf* (predecessors) and the latter as *al-khalaf* (successors).⁴²

Thalib points out that the establishment of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* appears to be identical to the persistence of the *ahl al-hadith* in defending the Qur'an and Sunna from the infiltration of the *ahl al-bid'a*, who were active in implanting philosophical thoughts into Islam some hundreds of years after the time of the Prophet, which resulted in the marginalization of the Sunna.⁴³ Ironically, as-Sewed argues, the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* has been only vaguely understood by Muslims, and that consequently the proponents of *bid'a* have been making use of it to legalize their teachings. This manipulation is suspected of having kept Muslims away from true Islam. He considers the Salafis to be the only group that deserves to have the right to use the term, claiming that other groups only make use of the term without any firm commitment to follow consistently the principle of the oneness of God, the main pillar of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*.⁴⁴ In this regard, Abu Ishak maintains that the Salafis reject any compromise with any other religious groups that allegedly have not adopted the path of the *Salaf al-Salih* in understanding the Qur'an and Sunna.⁴⁵ From Ihsan's point of view, they are the adherents of the correct or standard prophetic practices, to be distinguished from other Islamic sects, whose views are deemed to be rife with *bid'a*.⁴⁶

The Salafis' claim to be the only group truly attached to the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* has added a dimension to the prolonged debate surrounding this term and engaged in by almost all mainstream Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as the representative of Indonesian traditionalist Muslims,

⁴⁰ Interview with Abdurrahman Wonosari, Magelang, February 2003.

⁴¹ G. H. A. Juynboll, "Sunna," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IX (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 878-81.

⁴² For a detailed discussion on this, see Benyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 2.

⁴³ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Mengenal Sejarah dan Pemahaman Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah," *Salafy* 1 (1995): 14-17.

⁴⁴ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁴⁵ Interview with Muslim Abu Ishak, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

⁴⁶ Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

explicitly declares itself to be composed of the followers of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, as its constitution states. However, this organization interprets the term as referring to dedicated followers of one of the four established legal schools of Islam—the Hanafites, the Malikites, the Shafi'ites, and the Hanbalites—in religious practices, and of two theological schools combining both a rational and textual approach—the Ash'arites and the Maturidites—in belief.⁴⁷ In its general discourse, the modernist rival of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the Muhammadiyah, also claims itself to be the follower of the Sunna and the community of the Prophet, although such a claim has never been made explicitly. For example, in one of the decisions of its fatwa commission (*majlis tarjih*), there is a statement that “decisions on the principles of belief are to be based on the precepts of the *ahl al-haqq wa al-sunna*.”⁴⁸

Tension between these movements is a direct consequence of their respective claims to the right to use the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* to refer to their own members. The Nahdlatul Ulama has judged that members of the Muhammadiyah are excluded from the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* because of that organization's alleged neglect of the doctrines propounded by the *madhhab*. Some Muhammadiyah scholars have sought to defend their organization from such an accusation and have implicitly rejected the claim made by the Nahdlatul Ulama, explaining that adherence to the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* is defined by a determination “to follow their principle of belief and practice and to struggle for the glory of Islam and the Muslim *umma*.”⁴⁹ This rejection of Nahdlatul Ulama's restrictive interpretation has also been voiced by Persis. According to Moenawar Chalil, one of the main proponents of this organization, the concept of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* does not ineluctably teach that believers must follow the Shafi'ites in religious practices and the Ash'arites in belief, but instead that they must follow the Qur'an and the Sunna consistently.⁵⁰

Abdul Mu'thi insists that, in spite of their claims to be the adherents of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a*, the aforementioned mainstream Islamic organizations have allowed polytheistic and heretical elements to corrupt the beliefs and religious practices of their members.⁵¹ As-Sewed criticizes the organizations for using the term only as decoration, without making a proper, determined attempt to implement all of its principles. He blames the Nahdlatul Ulama, for instance, of having been indifferent to various putatively deviant traditions commonly practiced by its members, such as visiting tombs, conducting *tahlil* (praying for the deceased), and blindly imitating their religious authorities.⁵² From the perspectives of Abu Khalid, Abdurrahman, and Miftahuddin, all of whom are disciples of Thalib, the Nahdlatul

⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion on the concept of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a* among the Nahdlatul Ulama, see Choirul Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan NU* (Solo: Jatayu, 1985); M. Ali Haidar, *Nahdlatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia: Pendekatan Fikih dalam Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1994); and Michael Laffan, “The Fatwa Debated? Shura in one Indonesian Context,” *Islamic Law and Society* 12,1 (2005): 93-121.

⁴⁸ See Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in Twentieth-Century Indonesia: A Critical Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 68.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 77.

⁵⁰ Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al Quran dan As-Sunnah: Suatu Muqaddimah bagi Himpunan Hadis-hadis Pilihan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), p. 386.

⁵¹ Abdul Mu'thi, “Prinsip Imam Ahlussunnah dalam Al-Inshaf,” *Salafy* 4 (1996): 15-18.

⁵² Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

Ulama has totally neglected the example of the *Salaf al-Salih*.⁵³ Like-minded Salafis have leveled the same criticism against the Muhammadiyah, arguing that it has put too much emphasis on reason, to the extent that the Qur'an and the Sunna have been neglected. They assert that Islam is not a religion of reason, but rather a religion based on the prescriptions of the Qur'an and Sunna.⁵⁴

AL-WALA WA'L-BARA

The Salafis believe in the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara*, one of the pillars of the Salafi *da'wa* movement. In various places, Thalib has asserted the importance of this doctrine, which he interprets as that of "alliance and dissociation." Basically, *al-wala* means "to love, support, help, follow, defend," and *al-bara* means "to despise, desert, denounce."⁵⁵ Working from these concepts, he argues that *al-wala wa'l-bara* implies that any Muslim who claims to have faith in Allah must love, help, and defend Islam and other Muslims while at the same time denouncing infidelity and segregating himself or herself from the influence of infidels.⁵⁶ Theoretically, this doctrine entails a clear-cut distinction between the world of believers and that of unbelievers. A person's decision to migrate from a non-Muslim land to a Muslim land in order to safeguard personal religious beliefs, or an adherent's perseverance in refraining from behaviors associated with a non-Muslim way of life, can be considered forms of obedience to this doctrine.

The doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara* has provided the basis for the Salafis' choice to live in small tight-knit communities (*jama'a*), a general practice that is expected to protect them from *bid'a* and reinforce their unity in the face of Muslim enemies. Quoting Bin Baz, Thalib has stated:

When Muslims are united and thereby become aware of the dangers the enemies of Islam pose to them and their beliefs, they will be rigorous and persevering in defending the Muslim *umma* and protecting Islam. Our enemies have never expected that this sort of unity would materialize. They are always keen on trying to divide Muslims by spreading hatred and hostility among us.⁵⁷

As-Sewed adds that *al-wala wa'l-bara* is the principle to be followed consistently by all Muslims in order to answer the challenges of Muslim enemies.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Thalib and as-Sewed assert that the Salafis' community system is different from the system advocated by Qutb, who required committed individuals to form vital organic cells devoted to the realization of the true Islamic society; according to Qutb, these organic cells should form an independent entity separate

⁵³ Interview with Abu Khalid, Abdurrahman, and Miftahuddin, Yogyakarta, February 2003.

⁵⁴ Interview with Hardi Ibnu Harun and Ahmad Jauhari, Jakarta, December 2000.

⁵⁵ The discussion about the meaning of this term can be found in various Salafi websites. See, for instance, www.salafi.net, www.salafitalk.net, www.salafiduroos.net, and www.islamworld.net.

⁵⁶ Thalib, "Fitnah Sururiyah Memecah-belah Umat," pp. 16-17.

⁵⁷ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Memahami Hukum Jama'ah, Imamah dan Bai'ah," *Salafy* 12 (1996): 8-17.

⁵⁸ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

from the community in which they live.⁵⁹ Qutb's promotion of the necessity of the *jama'a* (community) system is related to his concept of *jahiliyya*, which considers the present world order to be dominated by pagan ignorance because it is governed by man-made regimes and systems, disregarding what God has prescribed.⁶⁰ To him, *jahiliyya* is not just a specific historical period, but a state of human affairs and socio-political orders characterized by ignorance and barbarism that existed in the past, exists today, and may exist in the future.⁶¹ Accordingly, Qutb divided the world into two spheres: *dar al-Islam* (the Abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the Land of War). Because the present world order is perceived to belong to the *dar al-harb*, Muslims are required to undertake *hijra* (migration) until the divine order is restored.⁶² It is worth noting that the concept of *hijra* often plays an influential role in shaping the ideological formation of an Islamist movement. It is a program of action that gives witness to the totality of God's sovereignty through the creation of a way of life that differs from the Western model.⁶³

The Salafis emphasize that they choose to segregate themselves in Muslim communities primarily because they wish to withdraw from corrupting innovations and live in accordance with the example of the *Salaf al-Salih*, not because they have committed to the revolutionary dream of creating a totally Islamic society, as suggested by Qutb. Thus as-Sewed strongly criticizes Qutb and asserts the dissimilarity between the meaning of "community" as defined by the Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood's definition of the concept. He is convinced that the community system of the Muslim Brotherhood has simply generated fanaticism, which has subsequently brought about disunity among Muslims. He levels a similar criticism against the Tablighi Jama'at, which in spite of its enthusiasm for the *jama'a* system he considers to be ignorant of the true principle of *al-wala wa'l-bara* because it inclines toward Sufism.⁶⁴

In light of what has just been said, it stands to reason that the Salafis acknowledge no *bay'a*, the doctrine of oath of allegiance that requires all members of a movement to vow loyalty to their leader (*'amir* or imam). This doctrine has been applied by most radical Islamist movements to assure the loyalty of their followers. In the eyes of Thalib, *bay'a* might entail a serious deviation from the principle of *al-wala wa'l-bara* because he believes that *bay'a* necessitates a declaration of unconditional loyalty to a *jama'a* leader under all circumstances, even if the leader commits sinful acts.⁶⁵ The rejection of *bay'a* significantly distinguishes the Salafis

⁵⁹ Yvonne Y. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, p. 87.

⁶⁰ Yvonne Y. Haddad, "The Quranic Justification for an Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb," *The Middle East Journal* 37,1 (1983): 14-29.

⁶¹ See Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 23-24.

⁶² Youssef Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, ed. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 19-33.

⁶³ See Gehad Auda, "The Normalization of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the 1970s to the Early 1990s," in *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago, IL, and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 367-77.

⁶⁴ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Bahaya Pemikiran Takfir Sayyid Qutb," *Salafy* 16 (1997): 27.

⁶⁵ Thalib, "Memahami Hukum Jama'ah, Imamah dan Bai'ah," pp. 8-17.

from the members of, for instance, the NII (Negara Islam Indonesia) movement. As noted in a previous chapter, the NII movement is a homegrown Indonesian Islamist movement, inspired by the Darul Islam rebellion, which arose in the 1970s and campaigned for the establishment of an Islamic state. In this movement, a loyalty to a particular 'amir is indeed fundamental, and the *bay'a* functions to bind the members' loyalties to the 'amir.

In their endeavors to abide by the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara*, the Salafis are committed to following specific codes of conduct and dress. Generally speaking, they prefer to adopt Arab clothing—a long white shirt, baggy trousers gathered above the ankle, and headgear—and allow their beards to grow long.⁶⁶ Female members wear long, fairly shapeless black dresses and cover their faces with veils. They are secluded from the men and are only allowed to have contact with males in the presence of their husbands or of *mahrims*, close relatives whom they are not allowed to marry. In short, their social interactions are highly restricted.⁶⁷ These practices all are believed to be effective means of distinguishing believers from infidels. For the same reason, Salafis also reject all entertaining distractions: music, theatre, and places of pleasure and entertainment, such as cafés, discotheques, and dance clubs.⁶⁸ Perfume, the cinema, television, and photographs are considered aspects of infidel cultures.⁶⁹

The doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara* developed by the Salafis is reminiscent of the guidelines espoused by Ibn Taymiyya, who witnessed the Mongol invasion of Damascus. He developed the idea that the divide between believers and unbelievers must be total. In his *Iqtida al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, he explained in detail all the rules of behavior Muslims should follow in order to distinguish themselves in their encounters with non-Muslims. According to him, Muslims, for instance, should speak Arabic in preference to any other language and should cut their hair and let their beards grow long in a manner different from that of Jews and Christians. The followers of these two religions (*Ahl al-Kitab*) were seen by him as active agents of unbelief who posed a threat to Islam.⁷⁰

HIZBIYYA

The Salafis are convinced that a faithful Muslim who follows the principles of the *al-wala wa'l-bara* would refrain from any involvement in partisan politics (*hizbiyya*). They strongly reject what they call *da'wa hizbiyya*, meaning Islamic movements that are perceived to value political engagement over the purification of the individual

⁶⁶ Cutting the beard is considered wicked, since such an act brings Muslims into invidious comparison with infidels. See Abu Nu'aim M. Faisal Jamil al-Madani, "Jenggot dalam Pandangan Islam," *Salafy* 7 (1996): 35-37.

⁶⁷ See Abu Zaki Fathur Rahman, "Hukum Berjabat Tangan dengan Wanita Bukan Mahram" and "Hukum Keluarnya Seorang Wanita Memakai Minyak Wangi," *Salafy* 4 (1996): 6-7. These articles compile some fatwas of the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Abd Allah Bin Baz, on the issues of shaking hands with women and the use of perfume by women.

⁶⁸ Music and movies, for instance, were considered heretical entertainments that should be avoided. See "Jebakan-jebakan Iblis," *Salafy* 24 (1998): 24.

⁶⁹ On their rejections on those things, see the fatwas of the Ahlu Sunnah published in *Salafy*.

⁷⁰ Thomas F. Michel, S. J., *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab al-Salih* (New York, NY: Caravan Books, 1984), pp. 84-85.

Muslim's religious beliefs and practices.⁷¹ Abdul Mu'thi defines the *da'wa hizbiyya* as "the political calls for fanaticism to a particular group which does not throw its whole weight behind the Salafi *manhaj*."⁷² He argues that the *da'wa hizbiyya* is opposed to the *da'wa salafiyya* for the following reasons: (1) it deviates from the way of faithful Muslims (*sabil al-mu'minin*); (2) its leader comes perilously close to the sins of *bid'a*; (3) its members are committed to the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara* on the basis of their loyalty to a particular leader rather than to the Qur'an and Sunna; and (4) it teaches fanaticism.⁷³ Here he attempts to emphasize the distinctiveness of the *da'wa salafiyya* as the only legitimate Islamic *da'wa* based on the Qur'an and Sunna, and in doing so, to reject all *da'wa* activities carried out by other Islamic groups.

The Salafis argue that the main error committed by the *hizbiyya* groups stems from their loyalty to the followers of *bid'a*. This mistake is believed to have caused division among Muslims because it teaches fanaticism to each separate group, prompting members to renounce any truths that might belong to the others. In as-Sewed's opinion, members of such groups become trapped in a funnel of narrow thinking, as they focus only on attempts to seize political power.⁷⁴ The Salafis direct their main criticism against the Muslim Brotherhood. Ibnu Syarif al-Atsary, another member of FKAJ's advisory council who was also Thalib's disciple, argues that the spirit of *hizbiyya* as defined by Qutb is tantamount to the pagan spirit of the *jahiliyya*.⁷⁵ From Thalib's point of view, adherence to the *da'wa hizbiyya* is one of the distinctive characteristics of polytheists (*mushrikin*). This is because those who support it use Islam as a weapon to create fanatical groups for their own political interests, and the result is that Muslims become fragmented and weak.⁷⁶

Paradoxically, however, the Salafis accuse the Muslim Brotherhood of being enmeshed in the sins of *bid'a* especially because of its ambition to unite the Muslim *umma*. Syafruddin and Bahrin, for instance, are convinced that the Muslim Brotherhood has a tendency to direct the loyalty of its followers unreservedly to certain leaders at the expense of the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the example of the *Salaf al-Salih*.⁷⁷ In order to legitimize their position, Syafruddin and Bahrin quote a number of fatwas from Bin Baz, al-Albani, al-'Uthaymin, and Salih Fauzan al-Fauzan that have been published in *Salafy*, which prohibit Salafis from showing any sympathy for the Muslim Brotherhood and similar Islamist movements.⁷⁸ Thalib therefore condemns Muslims sympathetic to the messages propagated by the ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood and other similar groups, whom he identifies

⁷¹ Roel Meijer makes a clear distinction between *al-da'wa* and *al-hizbiyya*, which he describes as two separate currents running through a number of Islamic movements in the contemporary Middle East. The difference between these two currents lies in the issue of whether involvement in politics is allowed. See Roel Meijer, *From Al-Da'wa to Al-Hizbiyya: Mainstream Islamic Movements in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine in the 1990s* (Amsterdam: Research for International Political Economy and Foreign Policy Analysis, 1997).

⁷² Abdul Mu'thi, "Memerangi Dakwah Hizbiyyah," *Salafy* 9 (1996): 16.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

⁷⁴ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁷⁵ Ibnu Syarif al-Bengkului as-Salafy al-Atsary, "Semangat Hizbiyyah, Semangat Jahiliyyah," *Salafy* 9 (1996): 51-54.

⁷⁶ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Akhlakul Muwahhidin dan Akhlakul Musyrikin," *Salafy* 16 (1997): 12.

⁷⁷ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin and Ma'ruf Bahrin, Jakarta, October 2001.

⁷⁸ See "Fatwa-Fatwa Ulama tentang Larangan Membentuk Jama'ah-Jama'ah Hizbiyyah," *Salafy* 9 (1996): 24-28.

as "Agitators of Religion" (*Kaum Pengacau Agama*). He argues that these people seek to realize their goals by exalting their own ideologues to such an extent that they effectively position them as idols. In his opinion, this strategy has led the Muslim *umma* astray, deafening it to the advice of the prominent *`ulama* of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama`a*, particularly the members of the Committee of Senior *`Ulama* of Saudi Arabia, the Ahl al-Hadith of Pakistan, and the Mu'tamar Ahl al-Hadith of Yemen.⁷⁹

Another allegedly false goal pursued by the Muslim Brotherhood, according to their Salafi critics, is the revival of the Islamic caliphate. The Salafis claim that this ambition is political in nature and threatens the purity of Islamic *da`wa*. Thalib maintains that a struggle to establish an Islamic caliphate would concentrate all Muslim minds and energies on political interests, potentially sparking bloody conflicts among Muslims themselves. He reiterates that Muslims should be consistent in their devotion to a core agenda: maintaining the purity of Muslim religious beliefs and practices and waging war against all forms of polytheism, innovations, and deviations, while reviving the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. Those who seek the revival of the Islamic caliphate believe that God made a promise to devout Muslims that this event would someday take place.⁸⁰ Abdul Mu'thi emphasizes that the concern with the establishment of the Islamic caliphate, in which *hudud* (penalties) such as the *rajm* sentence and amputation can be imposed on those who commit particular crimes, could cause Muslims to deviate from the *da`wa* propagated by Allah's messengers, who were concerned solely with the struggle for *tawhid*.⁸¹

The Salafis hold that the ambition to establish an Islamic caliphate has encouraged the members of the Muslim Brotherhood to support the Iranian Revolution without paying heed to "all the forms of infidelity of this revolution and the hostility of its proponents to the principle of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama`a*." As-Sewed asserts that the Muslim Brotherhood's sympathy for the Iranian revolutionaries even led them to advocate a unification between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam.⁸² The Salafis consider this to be an absolute mistake because they believe Shi'ites have clearly deviated from "true Islam," the *ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jama`a*, and positioned themselves as the enemies of Islam. Thalib unequivocally demonstrates his hostility to Ayatollah Khomeini, whose government he considers to be infidel.⁸³

The Salafis insist that one devastating result of the *hizbiyya* movements has been the spread of a revolutionary spirit among Muslims. Thalib cites a number of events as examples of catastrophes afflicting the Muslim world in the wake of this trend: the rebellion launched by the Jihad group in Egypt that perpetrated the assassination of Anwar Saddat, the Juhayman al-'Utaybi-led seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Muhammad ibn Surur al-Nayef Zayn al-'Abidin and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khalig's criticism of the Saudi Arabian royal family and its religious establishment, and the victory of FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) in Algeria. He concludes that any

⁷⁹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Perjalanan dari Luar Negeri," *Salafy* 5 (1996): 62-63.

⁸⁰ Thalib, "Memahami Hukum Jama'ah, Imamah dan Bai'ah," pp. 15-18.

⁸¹ Mu'thi, "Memerangi Dakwah Hizbiyyah," p. 13.

⁸² Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁸³ Thalib, "Perjalanan dari Luar Negeri," pp. 62-63.

attempt to take over power inevitably produces nothing but failure and leads to bloodshed among Muslims themselves.⁸⁴

Congruent with its nonrevolutionary approach, the Salafis have developed a moderate stance towards existing rulers. They maintain that Muslims must obey their legitimate rulers, whether just or unjust, on the condition that they are not commanded to commit any sin. In the opinion of Muhammad Afifuddin, another one of Thalib's followers, the only available way for Muslim citizens to resist legitimate rulers committing errors and acting cruelly is to advise those rulers to return to the right path:

The followers of the Sunna do not permit Muslims to disavow their loyalty to their legitimate rulers, let alone to resist them, even though they may be despotic and oppressive. The *Salaf al-Salih* categorized the resistance against legitimate rulers as a reprehensible innovation.⁸⁵

In defending such a doctrinal position, the Salafis refer to prominent Salafi *ʿulama*, including Bin Baz and Salih ibn Fauzan al-Fauzan. Both these leaders maintain that criticizing a legitimate ruler might bring about anarchy and that such an act is an absolute deviation from the Salafi *manhaj* (method).⁸⁶ Once again, their model for this nonrevolutionary attitude is Ibn Taymiyya, who despite being repeatedly arrested, forbade Muslims to take action against their legitimate ruler because such resistance might result in more harmful repercussions for Muslims.⁸⁷

HAKIMIYYA (SOVEREIGNTY)

Although the ideology of the Salafis seems nonrevolutionary, we encounter some of its ambivalences in dealing with certain issues, such as that of *hakimiyya*. This is a key concept developed by Qutb and Mawdudi, whose writings teach that in Islam governance belongs only to God, referring to the Qur'anic verse that reads, "Those who do not rule in accordance with what God has revealed are unbelievers" (Q: 5,47). Qutb, therefore, insisted on God's absolute sovereignty, and asserted that the only true *shari'a* is God's.⁸⁸ In developing this concept, Qutb was in fact inspired by Mawdudi, who had written that true sovereignty can be ascribed only to God, who is Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe.⁸⁹ In both Qutb's interpretations and those of Mawdudi, *hakimiyya* is understood to be one of the main components of *tawhid*.

⁸⁴ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Ratap Tangis di Aljazair: Sebuah Perjuangan yang Ternoda," *Salafy* 9 (1996): 65-6.

⁸⁵ Muhammad Afifuddin, "Makna Taat Kepada Allah, Rasul dan Ulil Amri," *Salafy* 4 (1996): 45.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁸⁷ Taqiy al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyya fi Naqd Kalam al-Shi'a al-Qadariyya*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Al-Qahira, 1962), p. 391.

⁸⁸ Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 151.

⁸⁹ Charles J. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," in Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, p. 105.

The Salafis reject the so-called *tawhid hakimiyya*, conceptualizing *hakimiyya* as an independent branch of *tawhid*.⁹⁰ They support this position by referring to a number of fatwas issued by the Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia maintaining that the *tawhid hakimiyya* is a form of *bid'a* exploited as a political weapon by *hizbiyya* groups.⁹¹ Thalib and as-Sewed argue that this understanding requires one to embrace the *takfir* doctrine, which has been used by *hizbiyya* groups as a means to legitimize their revolts against legitimate Muslim rulers.⁹² As explained in an earlier chapter, this doctrine teaches that the rulers—or even a society as a whole—who do not follow the *shari'a* are considered apostate (*kafir*) and consequently should be resisted and replaced by true Islamic leaders through the use of violence, if necessary.

From the Salafis' point of view, the use of the *takfir* doctrine is characteristic of what are called "neo-Kharijite groups" (*neo-Khariji*), inspired by the thinking of Qutb.⁹³ Thalib considers this doctrine to be a modern manifestation of the politics of the Kharijites,⁹⁴ who were notorious for declaring all other Muslims to be unbelievers; their confidence in making such broad judgments was founded on the *tawhid hakimiyya* or *mulkiyya*.⁹⁵ The main doctrine of the Kharijites is that a ruler cedes his legitimacy through any infraction of the divine law and must be therefore removed. The unjust ruler and his supporters are dismissed as infidels, unless they repent.⁹⁶ As noted by Hrair Dekmejian, the spread of this doctrine has left its mark on present-day Islamists, influencing not only their opposition to the *status quo*, but also their revolutionary method.⁹⁷

The Salafis argue that Qutb's advocacy of the *takfir* doctrine is highly dangerous, as it can lead Muslims into error and ultimately catastrophe. Taking Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali as his reference, as-Sewed insists that Qutb's interpretation of the doctrine was born of a false understanding of the phrase "there is no God but Allah," in which he interpreted the word "God" as *al-hakim*, the ruler, while in fact, according to as-Sewed, there is no such connotation known in Arabic. He is convinced that, as a consequence of this flawed understanding, Qutb was far too ready to excommunicate other Muslims.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ "Tauhid Hakimiyah antara Abdurrahman Abdul Khaliq dan Abdullah as-Sabt," *Salafy* 21 (1997): 14.

⁹¹ "Fatwa Hai'ah Kibaril Ulama Saudi Arabia: Istilah Tauhid Hakimiyah adalah Perkara yang Baru," and "Fatwa Nasr al-Din al-Albani, Penggunaan Kata Hakimiyya Termasuk Pelengkap Dakwah Politik," *Salafy* 21 (1997): 17-18.

⁹² Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁹³ "Tauhid Hakimiyah," p. 15.

⁹⁴ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁹⁵ Historically, the Kharijites emerged in the conflict that flared up in the aftermath of the assassination of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, the third caliph after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. They were deserters from the ranks of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, whom they repudiated because he agreed to arbitration in his conflict with Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan demanding justice for the death of 'Uthman. See Elie Adib Salem, *Political Theory and Institutions of the Khawarij* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956).

⁹⁶ See W. Madelung, "Imama," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. III (Leiden: Brill, 1971), pp. 1163-69.

⁹⁷ R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, 2nd edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 37.

⁹⁸ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Bahaya Pemikiran Takfir Sayyid Quthb," *Salafy* 16 (1997): 21-24.

Despite their explicit opposition to Qutb and his followers, however, the Salafis advocate a strict application of the *shari'a*, in effect making a political claim and vitiating their criticism of *hizbiyya* groups. Submission to the *shari'a* is considered compulsory because it is God's law. The Salafis emphasize that Muslims' acceptance of the *shari'a* as their only binding law constitutes one of the pillars of Islam. But they maintain that this is part of the *tawhid al-uluhiyya*, which entails that all kinds of worship are meant for God alone. According to their interpretation, to believe that those who do not apply the *shari'a* stray necessarily into infidelity (*takfir*), as implied by the *tawhid hakimiyya*, is a mistake.⁹⁹

Interestingly, the Salafis cannot avoid using the *takfir* doctrine in their analyses of the legal consequences for rulers who fail to honor the *shari'a*. But their rejection of these rulers falls short of declaring them all unbelievers. They distinguish between two categories of unbelievers: *Kafir I'tiqadi* (infidel at the level of belief) and *Kafir 'Amali* (infidel at the level of practice). While the first is no longer considered a faithful Muslim, the second is still accounted a Muslim, albeit a Muslim who commits sinful acts. According to Abu Sya'isa Adi Abdullah As-Salafy, another important disciple of Thalib, those who belong to the first category include:

- 1) Rulers who oppose the righteousness of the law of God and His messenger;
- 2) Rulers who do not oppose the law of God and His messenger, but believe that a law made by a being other than God and His messenger is better and more comprehensive;
- 3) Rulers who do not believe that man-made law is better than the law of God and His messenger, but nonetheless consider the former is equal to the latter;
- 4) Rulers who do not believe in the equality between the law of God and His messenger and man-made law, and still consider the former is better than the latter, but keep an open mind about the latter; and
- 5) Rulers who condemn the *shari'a* and oppose God and His messenger.¹⁰⁰

However, Abu Sya'isa does not list those who belong to the second category. He only gives an example of a ruler who, because of his individual interests, judges something on the basis of laws made by human beings, but still believes that the law of God and His messenger is the only true law and is aware of the mistakes he has committed. In this case, he is considered to have fallen into *kaba'ir* (great sin).¹⁰¹

Here we see the political nuances of the Salafis' ideology. It is apparent that the necessity to submit to the *shari'a* as a manifestation of *tawhid* has an inevitable consequence in their assertion that faithful Muslims should obey this law. Although these teachers seem cautious about the impact of this doctrine, as indicated by their creation of the category of *kafir 'amali*, the Salafis have asserted that the *shari'a* is the only legitimate law and that it should be followed by Muslims. It can be inferred therefore that the boundary between the Salafis and members of other Islamist groups in terms of ideology is, in fact, very thin.

⁹⁹ "Jargon Baru, Slogan Lama," *Salafy* 21 (1997): 1.

¹⁰⁰ Abu Sya'isa Adi Abdullah As-Salafy, "Kafirkah Berhukum Dengan Selain Hukum Allah?" *Salafy* 16 (1997): 52-53.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

DEMOCRACY

The closeness of the Salafi ideology to the thinking of the main Islamist ideologues, such as Qutb and Mawdudi, has become more clearly delineated in their responses to political issues that have arisen in the aftermath of the collapse of the New Order regime. They are particularly concerned with the issue of democracy, questioning whether or not it is incongruent with Islam. In this respect, Thalib argues that the conviction that all authority belongs only to God constitutes the base on which all governance in Islam rests; He is the holder of absolute authority to which all creatures must submit. Thalib insists that Muslims are prohibited from submitting to the will of the majority of the people, since the majority of them are in error.¹⁰²

Despite his repudiation of democracy, Thalib is of the opinion that a powerful and honorable ruler who upholds the law of God and His messenger must be established to guide the Muslim *umma*, and that this requires the full cooperation of religious scholars. From his point of view, (only) such a ruler can be categorized as the *ulu al-amr* since he is not chosen by the people but rather by the *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd*, defined as "a group of religious scholars and political leaders who act under the guidance of God and His messenger."¹⁰³ For Thalib, loyalty to the *ulu al-amr* is a necessary part of loyalty to God and His messenger. The ruler's authority comes in the form of vice-regency, or power delegated by God, and in many cases can be withdrawn from the ruler. The ruler thus has no real authority, for the source of authority remains God.

Thalib has, by his own admission, truly sought to examine the history of democracy before coming to a conclusion that it is indeed a practice whose principles are in contradiction to Islam. In this respect, he dismisses democracy as a vehicle that might lead to solutions for the problems afflicting the Muslim *umma* today and castigates it as a secular teaching that has the potential, instead, to lead to chaos and destruction. According to him, the only alternative for Muslims is to return to Islam:

All attempts to get away from the problems afflicting our nation will fail except a return to the way prescribed by God and His messenger. Muslims should be convinced of this solution and they should be aware of God's warning that they are being colonized by erroneous opinions introduced by the West.¹⁰⁴

Behind this explanation lies an idea of an Islamic state imagined as a system in which the legitimacy of a ruler is solely based on the absolute authority of God and His messenger, or in other words, on the principles of the *shari'a*.

According to Thalib, the loyalty to a legitimate ruler chosen by the *ahl al-hall wa'l-'aqd* is unconditional. People must obey their ruler, whether that ruler be just or despotic; there can be no reason to resist him. But Thalib's definition of legitimate rule is predicated on the religion of the ruler concerned, and thus neither absolute nor permanent. A Muslim is not bound to obey a government led by a *kafir*. In such a situation, rebellion is permitted in order to topple him from power, as long as Muslims have adequate power to achieve what they want. If they do not have the power, such a move is forbidden.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menyoal Demokrasi," *Salafy* 30 (1999): 4-6.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

This line of argument to some extent resembles Qutb's notion of revolution; Qutb taught that non-adherence to or a breaking away from Islamic law, which might qualify a ruler as a *kafir*, is sufficient grounds not only for civil disobedience but for a full-scale revolution.¹⁰⁶ This radical conception distinguished Qutb from other fundamentalist thinkers, who looked at revolution as an ethical concept and a political obligation. More moderate, Mawdudi saw revolution as a gradual and evolutionary process of cultural, social, and political reform, whose objective was to be just (*`adl*) and benevolent (*ihsan*). He thought that the process of changing the ethical basis of society should begin at the top and permeate down into the lower strata.¹⁰⁷

The Salafis use the Qur'anic term "*taghut*" to describe the ruler whose non-adherence to the *shari`a* is proven. In Islamist discourses, the term is adopted as a metaphor for a ruler who rejects submission to the *shari`a*. Abdul Mu`thi argues that a ruler can be considered *taghut* when he applies and concomitantly submits himself to non-divine laws. Because of this leader's opposition to the *shari`a*, he postulates that the *taghut* is the source of error and destruction. Referring to `Imad al-Din ibn Kathir (1301-1372), a Qur'anic scholar, Mu`thi therefore suggests that whosoever does not submit himself to the law of God will become an unbeliever, and it is compulsory to kill him unless he returns to the law of God. However, he does say that this opinion is not necessarily applicable to those who are convinced that the *shari`a* is superior to secular law.¹⁰⁸

This approach to the issue is very readily found among members of the NII movement. In their manual, the term *taghut* refers to a dictatorial ruler who rejects the *shari`a*.¹⁰⁹ Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the main NII ideologue and the founder of Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, underscores the fact that although such a ruler may implement part of the *shari`a* and enshrine Islam as the state religion, as long as he refuses to implement it in its totality, he belongs to the category of *taghut*, so that Muslims are justified in resisting him:

In confronting this sort of ruler, faithful Muslims should demonstrate their resistance. If they have the capability to resist by force, they should do so. If they lack such a capability, they should resist by word of mouth. If they do not have even this capability, they should keep resisting at least in their hearts, through refutation and disengagement. Muslims who do not demonstrate any kind of resistances have no faith.¹¹⁰

Due to their rejection of democracy, the Salafis oppose general elections. As-Sewed considers general elections to be a practice that deifies the will of the majority

¹⁰⁶ Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁷ Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰⁸ Abdul Mu`thi, "Taghut Sumber Kesesatan," *Salafy* 31 (1999): 18.

¹⁰⁹ Imaduddin al-Mustaqim, *Risalah Tarbiyyah Islamiyyah Menuju Generasi Yang Diridloi Allah*, p. 18. Note: no publisher, no year, and no place of publication. This is a sort of secret manual for NII members.

¹¹⁰ Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, "Pedoman Mengamalkan Islam Menurut Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah," in *Dakwah dan Jihad* Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, ed. Irfan Suryahardy Awwas (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2003), p. 87.

rather than the will of God. Consequently, it is tantamount to an act of polytheism.¹¹¹ In addition, an election is perceived as a tool used by the enemies of Islam to undermine the Muslim *umma*:

Those who agree with general elections and are active in them have positioned themselves as the enemies of Islam, because they give rights and opportunities to the enemies of Islam to condemn our religion as a religion incapable of providing its adherents with justice and prosperity. If they are convinced about the comprehensiveness of Islam, why should they accept the opinions of non-Muslims?¹¹²

A total rejection of democracy distinguishes the Salafis from members of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-i Islami. Moderate wings of these two movements take part in general elections, deeming them a legitimate way to win control of power and means through which the struggle for implementing the *shari'a* in a comprehensive manner can be realized. In Indonesia, this position has been taken by the Partai Keadilan, which participated in the 1999 general elections. As we have noted, this party later became the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, which gained significant support in the 2004 general elections.

The Salafis' repudiation of democracy is bound up with their hatred of Jews and Christians, whom they claim are the chief enemies of Islam. Thalib argues that the permanent hostility shown by Jews and Christians to Islam has led them to try to hamper Muslims at every turn from implementing the teachings of their religion and, if necessary, to force them to leave it. As far as he is concerned, these infidels are devils who never tire of attempting to terrorize and even eradicate Muslims.¹¹³ He relates his concerns about the Christian/Jewish threat to the contemporary political situation, as he sees too many Muslims submitting to the wills of Jews and Christians, uncritically accepting arguments in favor of defending the unity of the nation-state, maintaining the security of the people, and reducing the economic pressure afflicting society.¹¹⁴

JIHAD

Salafis' inconsistency in their attitudes toward political activism seems unequivocal given the fact that they pioneered the call for jihad in the Moluccas. This inherently political decision clearly contradicted what they had believed—that political activism, or more precisely *hizbiyya*, is a tendency that has thrown various Islamic groups into the sins of *bid'a*. This means that their repudiation of political activism is not an intrinsic part of their ideology, but rather is a tactic and strategy that can be used to shield them from repression by hostile ruling regimes and, thus, might be changed under favorable circumstances. In fact, apolitical and/or political tendencies adopted by any Islamist groups have constantly coexisted, and the choice of a certain mode has frequently been determined by political constraints.

¹¹¹ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Beberapa Kerusakan Pemilu," *Salafy* 30 (1999): 8-9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹¹³ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menangkal Makar Yahudi dan Nashrani," *Salafy* 31 (1999): 30-32.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

In the context of their response to the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis identified jihad as an obligation for every Muslim. What they mean by jihad here is clearly an armed war. As-Sewed argues that Muslims in the Moluccas have been slaughtered by the enemies of Islam and that all Muslims are thus obliged to wage war in order to prove their commitment to the *shari'a*; any repudiation of the fulfillment of this obligation would carry the risk of being an outcast from Islam.¹¹⁵ For Thalib, the willingness to participate in righteous jihad is a manifestation of the completeness of a Muslim's submission to God, and it constitutes a higher obligation than pilgrimage, prayer, or fasting,¹¹⁶ an idea reminiscent of the opinions expressed by Ibn Taymiyya.¹¹⁷ Jihad is thus recognized as an important part of the *shari'a* that Muslims must abide by totally. Commitment to jihad proves the strength of a person's *tawhid*.

The importance of jihad in Islam is rooted in the Qur'anic command that instructs believers to struggle on the path of God and follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his early Companions. The term "jihad" itself comes from the Arabic verb "*jahada*," meaning "to struggle" or "to expend effort" for a particular cause. In Islamic legal theory, the ways for a believer to fulfill his jihad obligation include using the heart, tongue, hands, and the sword. Jihad that employs the heart is concerned with combating the devil, and it is regarded as the greater jihad (*jihad akbar*). The jihad using tongue and hands is for enjoining right and forbidding wrong (*amar ma'ruf nahy munkar*). The jihad using swords is equivalent to war, and it is regarded as the lesser jihad (*jihad asghar*).¹¹⁸

The aspect of jihad that is equivalent to holy war has received particular attention in the debates of classical Muslim jurists. They divided this jihad into two kinds: offensive and defensive. Offensive jihad is identical to the war against unbelievers, waged in an effort to expand the territory of a Muslim state in order to bring as many people under its rule as possible. Participating in this jihad is considered a collective duty (*fard kifaya*), which is fulfilled if a sufficient number of people take part in it. If it is not fulfilled, all Muslims are sinning. Defensive jihad takes place when a territory occupied by Muslims is attacked by the enemy, and participating in this jihad becomes an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) for all Muslims capable of fighting. In both cases, jihad requires the approval of a legitimate ruler (imam) and has always been regulated by a host of ethical prerogatives and legal sanctions.¹¹⁹

Unlike classical jurists, modernist thinkers, including Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, were inclined to emphasize the nature of jihad manifested as defensive warfare. They were of the opinion that peaceful coexistence is the normal state between Islamic and non-Islamic territories, and jihad is only to be waged as a reaction against outside aggression. They envisaged various forms of aggression

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Mari Kita Sambut Panggilan Jihad!" *Suara Salafiyah* 1,1 (2000): 2-3.

¹¹⁶ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Jihad fi Sabil Allah: Solusi Problematika Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia," *Salafy* 34 (2000): 3.

¹¹⁷ See Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), p. 124.

¹¹⁸ Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁹ See Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), pp. 3-17.

against which jihad is lawful, such as a direct attack on an Islamic territory or a suspicion that such an attack is pending, and also the oppression of Muslims residing outside the boundaries of the Islamic state. To them, the offensive jihad as understood by classical Muslim jurists has no enduring place in Islam. While emphasizing the defensive nature of jihad, they broadened its meaning to include all kinds of moral and spiritual struggles. In this regard, they considered the translation of jihad to mean "holy war" as incorrect, and they denounced the usage.¹²⁰

Fully aware of the word's spectrum of meanings, Thalib prescribes certain limits on and requirements for the compulsion to commit oneself to jihad.¹²¹ Referring to the concepts developed by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya,¹²² the main disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, Dzulqarnain bin Muhammad al-Atsary, Thalib's disciple sent to study with Muqbil in Yemen and an important member of FKAJ's advisory board, distinguishes four levels of jihad, namely *jihad al-nafs*, *jihad al-shaitan*, *jihad al-kuffar wa al-munafiqin*, and *jihad arbab al-zulm wa'l-bid'a*. The *jihad al-nafs* means jihad against worldly temptations, which is accomplished by, among other means, improving one's knowledge of religion, practicing this knowledge in the right and proper fashion, spreading it to other Muslims, and being consistent in all these efforts. The *jihad al-shaitan* refers to jihad against devilish influences from inside and outside the self. The *jihad al-kuffar wa'l-munafiqin* means jihad against unbelievers and hypocrites and is performed by heart, word of mouth, physical strength, and use of one's property. The last one, *jihad arbab al-zulm wa'l-bid'a*, refers to jihad against despotism and heresy.¹²³

Syafruddin argues that what is intrinsic in jihad is a struggle to be consistent in keeping to the straight path, which is identical with the jihad of the first category noted above. But he also asserts that the prevailing situation in the Moluccas demands Muslims wage a jihad of the third category, namely *jihad al-kuffar wa'l-munafiqin*.¹²⁴ According to as-Sewed, this category is further divided into two sub-categories: *jihad al-talab* or *jihad al-hujm* and *jihad al-mudafa'a*. In a *jihad al-talab*, in which the offensive is taken, Muslims initiate an attack on infidels by offering them three choices: converting to Islam; paying a poll tax; or being subject to war. This sort of jihad is controlled by a host of regulations. For example, it can be carried out only under the command of a ruler whose legitimacy and leadership are approved by Muslims. In addition, it should be conducted under a strict ethical code; women and children are not allowed to be the targets of attacks. The *jihad al-mudafa'a* is a defensive action, initiated when Muslims are under attack by infidels.¹²⁵

The Salafis underscore this "self-defense" argument to legitimize their calls for jihad in the Moluccas. They consider it to be a defensive jihad waged against an

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 115-27.

¹²¹ Thalib, "Jihad fi Sabil Allah," pp. 4-5.

¹²² For detailed information about jihad according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, see his book, particularly the chapter on jihad: *Zad al-Ma'ad fi Hady Khayri al-'Ibad* (Beirut: Al-Muassasa al-Risala, 1987).

¹²³ Dzulqarnain bin Muhammad al-Atsary, "Jihad Menurut Timbangan Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah," *Salafy* 34 (2000): 11-14.

¹²⁴ Ayip Syafruddin, "Jihad sebagai proses Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar," a paper presented to a panel entitled "Menggagas Konseptualisasi dan Aktualisasi Ideal Jihad dalam Islam Kontemporer," held at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, October 28, 2000.

¹²⁵ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Ahkamul Jihad," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: DPP FKAJ, 2000).

unholy alliance of Jews and Christians attacking Muslims. This line of argument has been bolstered by some fatwas from the Middle East, as discussed in the previous chapter. As we have seen, Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i and Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali assert that in order to overthrow Christians who occupy the islands, jihad is compulsory for every Indonesian Muslim, and those living outside Indonesia are subject to a collective duty to help them.¹²⁶ In order to highlight their ruling that jihad of this kind is only lawful if it is waged for defensive goals, that is, to defend Muslims from attacks of Jews and Christians, they outline some requirements and prerogatives. For instance, in the fatwa of al-Wadi'i, Salafis are directed to focus on their proper task—propagating their vision of Islam in Indonesia—and measure their own capacity to fight jihad. He also warns them not to be trapped into a political game that can distract them from their focus on studying Islam and defending the Sunna. To him, jihad is also disallowed if it causes physical violence among Muslims themselves.

As-Sewed thereby claims that the nature of the Salafis' jihad is diametrically opposed to jihad launched by other Islamist groups active in fighting a war against Muslim rulers. He believes that these actions have caused jihad to become debased, turning it into little more than a form of rebellion. In his writing, as-Sewed constantly reiterates that the call for jihad in the Moluccas is an unavoidable necessity since Muslims in the islands are fighting against belligerent infidels (*kuffar harbiyun*) who have been killing them and plundering their property. Those who reject this jihad, while claiming the necessity to wage jihad against a legitimate ruler, he argues, fall into the error of the *bid'a* of the Kharijites.¹²⁷ His basic criticism is aimed at the interpretations of Qutb and Mawdudi, who, as we have seen, did champion aggressive jihad. As far as these authors were concerned, jihad was a state of total war, declared to bring about an end to the domination of man over man and of man-made laws, and to establish the recognition of God's sovereignty alone and the acceptance of the *shari'a*.¹²⁸ In this respect, ideologues like Qutb and Mawdudi consider jihad to be the sixth pillar of Islam. Qutb even claimed that those who saw jihad only as defensive weapon did not understand Islam.¹²⁹

Even though they have ruled that Muslims are obliged to wage jihad when attacked, the Salafis still stress the need to wait for the approval and command of a legitimate ruler. In the opinion of Abu Usamah, Thalib's follower and also a member of FKAJ's advisory board, jihad launched without the approval of a ruler can potentially incite chaos.¹³⁰ In this sense, their concept of jihad is no different from the classical one, which underlines that jihad can only be waged under the leadership of the legitimate imam. The importance of a ruler's approval is emphasized by the fatwa of Ahmad al-Najm, who advises the Salafis not to rush off to battle in the Moluccas without prior preparation or consultation. According to him, the Salafis

¹²⁶ See Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa Seputar Jihad di Maluku," *Salafy* 34 (2000): 8-9; Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, "Rekomendasi Syaikh Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i tentang Anjuran Membantu Mujahidin dan Muslimin di Maluku," *Bundel Maluku Hari Ini*, March-July 2000 (Yogyakarta: FKAJ, 2000). For a detailed discussion, see Hasan, "Between Transnational Interest and Domestic Politics," 73-92.

¹²⁷ As-Sewed, "Mari Kita Sambut Panggilan Jihad!" pp. 11-13.

¹²⁸ Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," p. 29.

¹²⁹ Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 205-06.

¹³⁰ See Abu Usamah bin Rawiyah An-Nawawi, "Jihad Bersama Imam," *Salafy* 35 (2000): 36-37.

must follow these steps: (1) Choose a representative who will meet the ruler to advise and reproach him, and (2) if the ruler takes their suggestions into consideration, then he should be obeyed.¹³¹

Given their position on what kind of ruler merits—or does not merit—obedience from his Muslim subjects, Salafis argue that jihad can still be waged, even when the ruler withholds approval, if that ruler has strayed into infidelity or simply wickedness, because the approval of an infidel (or wicked) ruler is no longer needed. In this case, as Dzulqarnain al-Atsary puts it, Muslims might appoint a contemporary imam who would unite them.¹³² Al-Najm's fatwa provides the foundation for this position, stating that "if the ruler rejects the suggestions to wage jihad on certain necessary conditions, then Muslims may rebel against him, provided that they have sufficient power." Al-Najm adds that "if there is no Muslim leader responsible for the jihad, then a temporary leader may be appointed."¹³³ Here lies the ambivalence of the Salafis, further complicating their already ambivalent conception of the relationship between Muslims and rulers. The question of when the ruler can be considered to have strayed into infidelity or wickedness is a matter of interpretation.

Understanding jihad as described above, the Salafis believe that those who fulfill the call for jihad to assist their Muslim brothers attacked by belligerent infidels deserve to receive the title of martyr if killed on the so-called jihad battlefields. It is not surprising that they claim to have no fear of going to the Moluccas. They are convinced that they will be confronted with only two possibilities: victory, which signifies that the fighter has upheld the dignity of Islam; or death, which earns a warrior the title of martyr, the highest title for a Muslim. In short, martyrdom is portrayed as a consummation that should be sought rather than as a risk that should be avoided. This belief has developed with the circulation of religious texts, replete with Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Traditions extolling the merits of fighting a jihad and vividly describing the reward waiting in the hereafter for those slain during the fighting. These texts accompany tales of martyrdom, describing, for instance, the martyr's body as pure and declaring that it would be welcomed in heaven by thousands of angels.

TOWARD WHICH END?

The question to be tackled in the rest of this chapter is why the "non-political-*da'wa*" ideology of the Salafis could so easily provide the foundation for political-jihad action that was waged under the aegis of Laskar Jihad. To answer this question, we should recall the key concept of the Salafi discourse, *tawhid*. In their interpretation, *tawhid* requires total submission to God. This submission is initially understood as a commitment to worship and honor God by avoiding all elements that smack of *shirk* and *bid'a*. Yet this commitment is not confined purely to the individual sphere—it is also social. It requires a faithful Muslim to devote himself to the efforts to purify Muslims' religious beliefs and practices from corrupting elements. For this purpose to be achieved, *da'wa* is essential, since the purity of a

¹³¹ See Thalib, "Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa," pp. 8-9.

¹³² Dzulqarnain bin Muhammad al-Atsary, "Ahkamul Jihad: Mengangkat Pemimpin dalam Jihad," *Salafy* 35 (2000): 17-18.

¹³³ See Thalib, "Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa," pp. 8-9.

Muslim's beliefs and practices constitutes an absolute condition for regaining the glory of Islam, an achievement that God has promised will be realized absolutely.

Nevertheless, this broad and crucial effort to insure the purity of Muslim beliefs and practices is only an early stage in a long process toward a triumphal conclusion, according to Salafi doctrines. It is the stage at which the followers are recruited to join the community of *tawhid* (*muwahhidun*), who achieve progress by modeling their behavior on the examples set by the Prophet Muhammad and early generation of pious Muslims. Initiates who have succeeded in gaining admittance to this community find that the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara* is revered as one of the pillars of Muslim belief; this doctrine binds the followers closely together. Although the Salafis do not recognize the existence of *bay'a* (requiring an oath of allegiance to a leader), the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara* is assurance enough that the loyalties of the followers are directed only to the community. Their loyalties are reinforced even more by the doctrine of *ahl al-sunna wa'l jama'a*. Those followers who accept this doctrine are completely convinced that they belong to the only Muslim group whose salvation is guaranteed.

On the basis of the doctrine of *al-wala wa'l-bara*, firm distinctions are drawn between the members of the community and outsiders. The members of this community associate outsiders with *shirk* and *bid'a*, people whose lives fail to honor the principles of *tawhid*. The heritage of Ibn Taymiyya's ideology, which developed in a period of high tension between Muslims and Christians, has added a dimension. The purity of this community is believed to guarantee the immunity of its members from the influences of infidels (identified with Jews and Christians). The particular pattern of dress, performance, and social relationships adopted by the Salafis significantly expresses the feeling that they are constantly threatened by external influences spread by "the enemies of Islam."

It should be noted that the group identity shaped in this manner is not something that can be shared with other people, not even other Muslims who might appear to be likely allies. By denouncing *hizbiyya* (political engagement), the Salafis distinguish themselves from members of any other Islamist movements that have similar doctrines and ideology. In fact, the key ideologues of those Islamist movements become the primary targets of their criticism, criticism so marked that the Salafis themselves appear to be an anti-political group. Yet this stance does not guarantee their immunity from politics since some elements in their ideology have ambiguous meanings, particularly in relation to the notion of the *shari'a*.

The political commitment of the Islamist ideologues generally stems from their interpretation of *tawhid*, which necessitates a submission to the *shari'a* (*hakimiyya*). Absolute faith in the oneness of God and of His exclusive sovereignty is meant to reinstate Islam as a political system. The same concept is key to the Salafis' outlook, but they refuse to accept the logical conclusion reached by these ideologues: that submission to the *shari'a* requires the establishment of an Islamic state (the *tawhid hakimiyya*). For the Salafis, the creation of an Islamic state is not a priority; they believe it can be achieved gradually, provided that Muslims walk on the straight path in a consistent manner. In other words, its realization constitutes the promise of God to faithful Muslims.

Having the same understanding as members of other Islamist groups in terms of the necessity to submit to the *shari'a*, however, the Salafis face some difficulties in dealing with questions concerning obedience to an infidel ruler. Their discourse asserts that the *shari'a* provides no justifications for revolt against such a ruler, except

for a clause that states “before his infidelity can be measured for sure.” This clause is important, because within a certain context it makes it possible for the Salafis to withdraw from their initial position. Confronting this issue, Thalib has argued that in a chaotic situation the task of embracing good and forbidding evil, *al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*, is obligatory and that this task can only be fulfilled properly through political power.¹³⁴

Considering their ambivalent position, it is not difficult to understand how the Salafis might resort to political activism and militancy, as clearly happened when they called for jihad. They justify this apparent inconsistency by associating jihad with *da'wa* and arguing that jihad constitutes a form of Islamic propagation to build an ideal, alternative society free from Western cultural stains. It is aimed at giving a correct understanding of prescriptions covering *'aqida* (faith), *'ibada* (rituals), and *mu'amala* (social life). Yet despite these justifications and rhetorical fine points, it must be acknowledged that the Salafis have entered into the most dangerous political arena of the Islamists. Still, they assert that jihad in the Moluccan islands is simply for the defense of Muslims against their aggressive enemies.

Certain doctrines do restrain them. Since they believe that jihad is only allowed with the approval of a legitimate ruler, before going to the Moluccas the Salafis sent their representatives to meet with President Abdurrahman Wahid in April 2000. When Wahid refused them permission to fight jihad, they requested another fatwa from Zayd Muhammad ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, noting that:

[President] Wahid's prohibition of jihad in order to help Muslims in Ambon is unlawful and, consequently, there is no longer a need to obey him. According to a *hadith* of the Prophet, “It is not permissible to obey someone who is disobedient to Allah.”¹³⁵

Based on this fatwa, the Salafis argued that Wahid was no longer legitimate and declared him to be not only unjust, but *kafir*:

Abdurrahman Wahid was clearly inclined to side with two groups, Christians and Communists, so that the position of Islam became dangerously exposed to the plot of the enemies of Islam. After we consulted some Salafi authorities in the Middle East, we could draw a conclusion that Abdurrahman Wahid is in fact a *kafir* ruler on the basis of the statements he has made so far. He no longer deserved the title of a legitimate ruler who should be obeyed.¹³⁶

Here the clause “after his infidelity has become clear” comes into play, for Muslims are not obliged to obey a ruler deemed to have become mired in infidelity. Abu Ubaidah Syafruddin al-Atsari wrote in response to this question, “A ruler who has convincingly been proved to be a *kafir* or to have given strange commands no longer deserves to be obeyed.” But he also stressed that “the obligation to disobey [rebel against] a ruler is valid only as long as Muslims have the ability to do so.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Ja'far Umar Thalib, “Menyikapi Perkembangan Politik Nasional,” *Tasjilat Ihyaassunnah al-Islamiyyah*, cassette record (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

¹³⁵ See Thalib, “Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa,” pp. 8-9

¹³⁶ Ja'far Umar Thalib, “Gus Dur Tak Berhak Ditaati,” interview, *Sabili* 22,7 (April 2000): 80.

¹³⁷ Abu Ubaidah Syafruddin al-Atsari, “Kapan Saatnya Memberontak?” *Salafy* 37 (2001): 51.

After having rejected the authority of Wahid, the Salafis appointed Thalib as temporary commander of their jihad mission in the Moluccas. By this appointment the Salafis implicitly recognized Thalib as a temporary ruler whose commands should be followed. For Thalib, the appointment was lawful because there was no legitimate ruler in power who merited obedience from all Muslims. He argued that the fierce conflict in the Moluccas had rendered this province a territory without a ruler:

Who is the ruler? All members of the state apparatus, including policemen, attorneys, judges, have forfeited authority. They were powerless. In practical terms there is no ruler.¹³⁸

While the Salafis were glorifying jihad, some of their ideologues espoused the perfect nature of the Islamic state as one that bestows mercy on the whole world. As-Sewed, for instance, wrote:¹³⁹

Why should we be afraid of an Islamic state, the state that protects all subjects and leads them to prosperity? This state will give non-Muslims opportunities to observe their religion, while witnessing the comprehensiveness of Islam. This will eventually encourage them to convert to Islam. This signifies that the Islamic state is a benediction for them. In this state, Muslims are not allowed to disturb non-Muslims living as *kafir dhimmi*, on the condition that they obey the rules of the state and pay poll tax.¹⁴⁰

This statement clarifies that, despite their repudiation of the *hizbiyya* tendency among Muslims, the Salafis never forget their dream of an Islamic state. They consistently imagine that this dream eventually will come true.

¹³⁸ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Tuduhan Berlapis Menimpa Ja'far," interview, *Gatra* (May 19, 2001): 30.

¹³⁹ Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, "Islam sebagai Rahmat Untuk Seluruh Alam," *Salafy* 36 (2001): 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ In the discourse on *fiqh*, the term *kafir* (plural, *kuffar*) refers to unbelievers, both *dhimmi* and *harb*. The *harb* are belligerent infidels. The *dhimmi* are those non-Muslims who accept the authority of a Muslim state and live in harmony with Muslims. W. Bjorkman, "Kafir," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 407-09. See also Ch. Cahen, "Dhimma," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p. 231.

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CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN IDENTITY IS SHAKEN

Thousands of Salafis welcomed the call for jihad in the Moluccas announced by Ja'far Umar Thalib with enthusiasm. They competed to enlist to venture to the frontlines and fight against Christians. Their readiness to support the call was key to the success of Laskar Jihad's formation. Through it, programs formulated by Thalib and other main actors among the Salafis could be translated into collective action. Even when Laskar Jihad was still in its embryonic phase, these cadres already provided relentless support by participating in various *tabligh akbars* (mass religious gathering) and other collective actions organized in numerous cities in Indonesia.

The recruits' engagement in this action was generally preceded by their association with the Salafi "Ihyaus Sunnah" movement. A strict religious organization (described above in Chapter Two), the Ihyaus Sunnah demands complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to the distinctive lifestyle of its members. To some extent it can be identified as a "sect," defined by Laurence R. Iannaccone as "a religious organization with a highly committed, voluntary, and converted membership, a separatist orientation, an exclusive social structure, a spirit of orientation, and an attitude of ethical austerity and demanding asceticism."¹ No doubt such an organization acts as kind of refuge for believers who have undergone an internal *hijra* (migration) to shelter themselves from the stains and temptations of the outside world.

The task of this chapter is to examine the social backgrounds of these people—a challenging puzzle—and the process of their involvement in the movement. Discovering social attributes at the micro level—the motivations, impulses, and aims of an individual's involvement in a radical Islamist movement—should facilitate sound analysis at the macro level of the sociological roots that have contributed to this phenomenon. Certainly, people are driven to join a religious movement by identifiable personal problems, which are frequently tied to their experiences dealing with rapid social changes set in motion by the processes of modernization.²

Social scientists have recognized the expansion of modernization as an unsettling development that contributes to the growing complexity of people's social lives. The decline in traditional forms of authority, which occurs in tandem with the rise of rationality, results in a shift in the way people view life. In describing modernization as a general process in which (identity-based) communal action (*Gemeinschaft*) is

¹ Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," *American Journal of Sociology* 99,5 (March 1994): 1192. For a comparison, see also Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, CA: University California Press, 1985) and Thomas Robbins, *Cults, Converts, and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (London: Sage, 1988).

² James A. Beckford, ed., *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Changes* (London: Sage/Unesco, 1988). See also Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

replaced by (rationally regulated) social action (*Gesellschaft*), Max Weber underlined institutional changes involving differentiation, specialization, and the development of hierarchical, bureaucratic forms of social organizations, as well as changes in intellectual or attitudinal trends entailing the "disenchantment of the world."³ Taking a similar approach, Emile Durkheim highlighted the replacement of the older, mechanical form of social solidarity rooted in the collective conscience of traditional societies with organic solidarity based on the division of labor and presupposed functional interdependence based on difference.⁴ In their theories, the shifting of rationality or solidarity forms is understood to act as a catalyst that opens up social, economic, and cultural possibilities, but simultaneously ushers in a plethora of problems that were previously undreamed of. This problem is particularly related to the process of secularization that occurs when religion is eroded, or in some cases eliminated, as an institution in human society.⁵

While still equating modernity with rationality, contemporary social theorists have identified both the social benefits and the costs that accompany the rise of this sort of rationality. Jürgen Habermas, for instance, contends that rationalization consists of the development of greater moral insight, an enhanced ability to think critically about ethical life, and the universalization of moral values. What he calls "communicative rationality" involves the creation of consensus formulated by participating equals, a process that allows people to be free from unnecessary social, natural, and psychological constraints.⁶ Habermas sees this form of rationality as a necessity in the modern, complex world, as it enables societies to create a balance between the system and the individual's lifeworld. Here, "system" refers to the economic and bureaucratic spheres of modern life predominantly informed by instrumental rationality, while "lifeworld" refers to the realms of human interaction, such as family, friends, and voluntary association.

Yet it is difficult to achieve this balance because, as Habermas indicates, modern societies are threatened by "colonization" of the lifeworld, a modern phenomenon that occurs when the system criteria associated with instrumental reason become part of everyday life. This happens as corporations take over more of people's leisure time, as consumerism runs rampant and undermines true free choice, and as the state intervenes and controls more of the lifeworld.⁷ The argument engendered by this form of rationality forms the basis for Habermas's idea of civil society, which embodies subjective and principled freedom and which gives priority to the rational pursuit of self-interest, the equal right to participate in political decision-making, and ethical autonomy and self-realization.⁸

³ Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. trans., and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1958), p. 51.

⁴ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1964), pp. 168-73.

⁵ Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 47-8.

⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 145.

⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1987), pp. 153-5.

⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 45-46 See also Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), pp. 363-70.

The expansion of globalization as marked by a growing interdependence of national economies and cultures, as well as cross-cultural intervention, exacerbates the matter.⁹ As Arjun Appadurai has recognized, the transnationalism set in motion by globalization has changed people's relations to space, and as a consequence many people face increasing difficulties in relating to, or indeed producing, "locality" (as a structure of feeling, a property of life, and an ideology of situated community). He goes on to argue that, principally because of the force and form of electronic mediation between spatial and virtual neighborhood, transnationalism causes the steady erosion of social relationships.¹⁰

In fact, globalization has generated a new form of social organization based on an increasingly dense global network in which locality and personal identity are being swept away. Existing mechanisms of social control and political representation are thus disintegrated. In this context, Manuel Castells argues that globalization inevitably shakes institutions, transforms cultures, creates wealth and induces poverty, spurs greed, innovation, and hope, and simultaneously imposes hardship and instills despair.¹¹ It is therefore not surprising that, because of the expansion of globalization, many people are apt to "resent the loss of control over their lives, over their environment, over their jobs, over their economies, over their government, over their countries, and ultimately over their fate on the Earth."¹²

SOCIAL COMPOSITION

Laskar Jihad claimed to have recruited approximately ten thousand fighters out of forty thousand Salafis associated with the Ihyaus Sunnah network. This figure represents almost two-thirds of all male adults in the network, since women and children are automatically excluded from the obligation to participate in jihad. The recruits are scattered all over Indonesia, from Medan in North Sumatra to Makassar in South Sulawesi, with concentrations in Central Java, including Yogyakarta, Solo, Wonosobo, Temenggung, Semarang, Kebumen, Purwokerto, and Cilacap. The majority of members are therefore ethnically Javanese. In these regions, they construct enclaves, called "titik daurah" (*daura* sites), which are usually centered on modest mosques or *musallas*, smaller places to pray.

During two different periods of my fieldwork, I systematically and intensively interviewed 125 fighters and veterans who could provide empirical evidence of their engagement in Laskar Jihad missions in the Moluccas. These interviews were conducted specifically for the purpose of discovering the social composition of this group. In my first fieldwork stint, I focused on the two main headquarters of Laskar Jihad, located at Degolan in Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, and Cempaka Putih Tengah, in Central Jakarta. In a dozen visits, I succeeded in interviewing twenty-seven fighters chosen randomly out of hundreds entering and leaving the headquarters. Their

⁹ As for the meaning of globalization, see Donatella Della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Social Movements in a Globalizing World: an Introduction', in Donatella Della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi and Dieter Rucht, eds., *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 204-05.

¹¹ Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, vol. II, *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-2.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

availability and willingness to share experiences determined my choice of respondents. In my second fieldwork stint, I broadened my attention to areas outside the two main headquarters and conducted interviews in places where Laskar Jihad veterans are concentrated both in and outside Java, including Yogyakarta, Solo, Magelang, Wonosobo, Semarang, Cirebon, Makassar, and Ambon. During this fieldwork, I interviewed ninety-nine Laskar Jihad members who were also chosen randomly.

Insofar as I have been able to establish, these fighters are, by and large, young militants whose ages range between twenty and thirty-five years old. Almost half of them are students, dropouts and graduates from a dozen universities in Indonesia, particularly those located in Central Java. These include Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, State University Sebelas Maret in Surakarta, Diponegoro University in Semarang, and General Sudirman University in Purwokerto. The only other universities represented are the Institute of Technology in Bandung and Hasanudin University in Makassar. These students are generally enrolled in science and engineering departments, especially Physics, Electronics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Chemical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Architecture, Medicine, Biology, Forestry, and Animal Husbandry. Some are enrolled in departments of social sciences, such as Management, Accounting, Political Sciences, Communications, and Public Administration.

The fact that these universities are the favored destinations of thousands of students from various regions in Central Java wanting to pursue higher education may shed some light on the family backgrounds of the fighters. Besides those from upper-middle and middle-class homes, a significant number of these students come from the lower classes. For instance, Gadjah Mada University, which contributed more fighters to Laskar Jihad than any other Indonesian university, notes that around 30 percent of its students come from peasant families.¹³ It is understandable then that, in contrast to the metropolitan University of Indonesia in Jakarta, this university is fond of cultivating a modest atmosphere of a "*kampus dheso*," a Javanese term meaning "village campus."

Indeed, most students engaged in the Laskar Jihad missions to the Moluccas and other trouble spots openly acknowledge their simple rural background; their parents generally live as peasants owning limited farmland. Because the economic policies of the state have tended to neglect agricultural development, it has become increasingly difficult for this stratum to improve their socio-economic status. These same students, however, reject any association between their rural background and their decision-making, because they perceive a great difference between themselves and their families in the countryside, particularly in terms of religious observance. Some clearly indicate that their families belong to the *abangan* group in Javanese society, who accept Islam only partly and still practice traditional rituals. In reality, the students themselves have only become acquainted with Islam after migrating to the cities in order to pursue higher education.

Villages in Central Java's wet-rice heartlands are strongholds of *abangan* culture. Though Islam began to spread during the decline of the Majapahit Kingdom in the fourteenth century, large portions of this region preserved their older forms of worship. This is because the Mataram court, which emerged as the political center of

¹³ Bambang Purwanto, Djoko Suryo and Soegijanto Padmo, eds., *Dari Revolusi ke Reformasi: 50 Tahun Universitas Gadjah Mada* (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1999), p. 68.

Java by the end of the sixteenth century, did not purge Hindu-Buddhist religious legacies. Instead, it maintained a strongly indigenous and Indic style in the arts and in the political pageantry of the court.¹⁴ Only in the nineteenth century did forms of orthodox Islam begin to exert a significant impact, exposing the distinction drawn between the *abangan* and the *santri*. This distinction sharpened after Indonesian independence, when the commitment to orthodox Islam within the *santri* community was greatly strengthened in response to contemporary politics. Following the abortive communist coup in 1965, however, Java's *abangan* felt a need to align themselves with one of the five religions recognized by the government. Because of their traumatic experience with Muslims, especially with Anshor youths of the Nahdlatul Ulama who helped the military kill thousands accused of being associated with communism, many preferred to convert to Christianity, Buddhism, or Hinduism.¹⁵

Generalizations are easy to make and should be treated with some caution. To balance the picture, one must note that a significant number of Laskar Jihad fighters come from non-peasant families. Their close relatives are petty bureaucrats, teachers, small merchants, and even businessmen in small towns or villages. Some claim to belong to *santri* families. Among them are sons of activists of small branches of Muslim modernist organizations, notably the Muhammadiyah. In contrast to fighters from the *abangan* families, these young men were well acquainted with Islam and its various aspects before becoming involved in Islamic activism. Many had even completed their secondary education in Muhammadiyah schools and had had experience in Muhammadiyah youth organizations such as the Muhammadiyah Scouts (Hizbul Wathan, HW) and the Muhammadiyah Youth Union (Ikatan Remaja Muhammadiyah, IRM). In addition to those from the *moderen santri* background, a few fighters came from the *kolot*, or old-fashioned, *santri* families associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama. A dozen fighters claim to have studied at traditional *pesantrens* in Central Java. They come from the north coast of the province, where the Nahdlatul Ulama members are concentrated.

In addition to university students, Laskar Jihad recruited rank-and-file fighters whose educational background was limited to senior high school or lower. They were mustered from the outskirts of cities, small towns, and villages. Generally with low incomes, they earn their livelihood as petty traders, artisans, tailors, unskilled workers, factory workers, peasants, and agricultural laborers. A significant number of them are unemployed. Like their counterparts from the universities, they claim that they belonged to *abangan* families before transforming themselves into orthodox Muslims. The role played by the Salafi *pesantrens* and other *da'wa* institutions that introduced them to the Salafis' variant of Islamic orthodoxy cannot be underestimated.

Solo (Surakarta) is the city that contributed the most fighters from this social background to Laskar Jihad. As the seat of the Surakarta Court, Solo has many similarities with Yogyakarta. It shares the reputation of being a cultural center of Javanese civilization, which persistently preserves symbols of the *abangan* culture. Despite its *abangan* character, Solo's history is unique in the context of the dynamics

¹⁴ M. C. Ricklefs, *Islamization in Java: An Overview and Some Philosophical Considerations* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1984), pp. 13-15.

¹⁵ Ibid. See also A. H. Johns, "Islam and Cultural Pluralism," in *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society*, ed. John L. Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 216.

of Islam in Indonesia. In this city the Sarekat Dagang Islam (Muslim Merchant Union, SDI), which later transformed itself into the Sarekat Islam (Islamic League, SI), the first political organization of Indonesian Muslims, was born in the first quarter of the twentieth century.¹⁶ As the organization's birthplace, Solo has consistently demonstrated a spirit of Islamism. Hadrami merchants who dominate sectors of traditional trade, such as batik, have cultivated and preserved this fervor. Their main competitors are Chinese merchants who appear to have the upper hand in controlling larger-scale trade. Solo has therefore suffered from social tensions that have occasionally erupted in turmoil and violence.¹⁷

The crucial position of Solo as a recruitment center for Laskar Jihad is confirmed by certain clearly observable facts. According to Ayip Syafruddin, chairman of FKAJ (Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Communication Forum of the Followers of the *Sunna* and the Community of the Prophet), it was the first city to commit to Laskar Jihad missions in the Moluccas. The group's activities during its embryonic phase were organized there, where fourteen Salafi activity centers recruited fighters from a wide range of occupational backgrounds: tailors, factory workers, pedicab drivers, artisans, peasants, agricultural laborers, and teachers in village private schools. A few paid their own way to the Moluccas. Thalib also emphasizes Solo's importance. He has stated that the fanaticism of Surakartan Muslims in opposing the remnants of communism became one of the most important considerations inclining him to choose the city as the place where FKAJ *tabligh akbars*—which led to the formation of Laskar Jihad—should take place.¹⁸

Wonosobo is another region in Central Java that contributed a significant number of combatants to Laskar Jihad. In contrast to the fighters from Solo, those from Wonosobo, which used to be a largely *abangan* area, are mostly peasants, or, more precisely, agricultural laborers who cultivate potatoes, cabbages, carrots, and other vegetable crops on ex-plantation areas controlled by businessmen who live both inside and outside the town. Some villages have provided fertile ground for the Salafi *da'wa* movement. Adjacent to Wonosobo, Temengging, a tobacco-producing region, also contributed several hundred fighters to Laskar Jihad. The majority are tobacco growers, or agricultural laborers working on tobacco-farming land. Kebumen and Cilacap, two areas located in the south of the same province, also proved to be breeding grounds for activism, as hundreds of rice-growing peasants, agricultural laborers, and petty traders from these regions joined the Laskar Jihad mission.

Outside Java, cities notable for contributing recruits were Pekanbaru, Balikpapan and Makassar. Non-Javanese fighters who joined Laskar Jihad generally came from these three cities. Before joining, they worked as peasants, agricultural laborers, factory workers, sailors, pedicab drivers, and petty merchants. Pekanbaru is one Sumatran city that has not played much of a role in the history of Islamic movements in Indonesia. Islamism emerged there only in the mid-1990s, with the establishment

¹⁶ On the intellectual and ideological developments in Surakarta in the early twentieth century and their relationship to marked popular unrest in the region, see Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1920-1926* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

¹⁷ For a further account of social tensions in Surakarta, see Soedarmono, *Kajian Historis Model Kota Konflik dan Rekonsiliasi: Studi Historis Kerusuhan di Surakarta* (Jakarta: Direktorat Sejarah Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2001).

¹⁸ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

of the Salafi *pesantren*, al-Furqan. This contrasts with Balikpapan, located in East Kalimantan, which had become acquainted with Islamism earlier, when Abdullah Said, the founder of the Pesantren Hidayatullah, built his *pesantren* in the area of Gunung Tembak at the beginning of the 1970s. Nevertheless, Islamism in these two cities does not run particularly deep compared to Makassar, which enjoys a widespread reputation for Islamist zeal bequeathed to it by the Kahar Muzakkar-led Darul Islam rebellion of the 1950s.¹⁹

BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH ISLAM

For these people, joining Laskar Jihad appears to have been a sort of religious adventure. It normally began with a process of getting acquainted with an orthodox version of Islam disseminated by a variety of Islamic *da'wa* groups operating under the banner of the *Tarbiya* movement. As noted in an earlier chapter, these groups have developed since the beginning of the 1980s on university campuses and other target areas. Potential recruits became acquainted with Islam in different ways. Some actively sought out religious activities organized by the groups as soon as they arrived in the cities. Others were essentially passive; their interest was aroused only after they unwittingly became targets of Islamic mission activities. This process occurred primarily through preexisting social networks and interpersonal bonds. The pattern has been, as Lorne L. Dawson suggests, "friends recruit friends, family members each other, and neighbors recruit neighbors."²⁰ Either familial or spatial closeness with an active member of an Islamic group, therefore, has often been a determining factor in the conversion process.

In the work cited earlier, Iannaccone underscores the significance of social ties in determining one's engagement in a strict religious movement. He argues that people who lack extensive social ties to friends and family outside the sect are more likely to join (or remain active), and are even more likely to join if they have friends or family in the sect. People with extensive social ties are less likely to join a sect. Iannaccone argues that a potential member's social ties predict the likelihood of conversion far more accurately than his or her psychological profile. From Iannaccone's point of view, however, this is not the only variable that influences an individual's propensity to join to a sect. Economic factors also play a role. He suggests that people with limited secular opportunities, such as those who earn a relatively low income and have limited education or minimal job experience, are more likely to join compared with those who have established economic positions. This pattern is associated with a cost and benefit variable: those most likely to join are those with the least to lose.²¹

The life histories of some Laskar Jihad fighters are revealing. F. Abu Ahmad, a fighter from Solo who was born into an *abangan* family faithful to Javanese *kebatinan* (syncretic mysticism), said that his interest in Islam had only begun ten years before,

¹⁹ See Anhar Gonggong, *Abdul Qahhar Mudzakkar, Dari Patriot Hingga Pemberontak* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 1992).

²⁰ Lorne L. Dawson, "Who Joins New Religious Movements and Why: Twenty Years of Research and What Have We Learned?" in *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader*, ed. Lorne L. Dawson (London: Blackwell, 2003), p. 119.

²¹ Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches Are Strong," pp. 1200-01.

during the first year of his study at the Mathematics Department of Gadjah Mada University:

At that time, some of my colleagues who happened to come from the same city I had come from told about the Shalahuddin Community, which organized regular religious lectures. They suggested I attend the lectures, insisting on their usefulness in broadening one's insights in Islam. But I lacked the confidence to do so, particularly because I was aware of my ignorance of basic knowledge of Islam. But my colleagues continued to try to convince me about the importance and significance of the lectures until I finally decided to follow them. I still remember, the first time I attended the lectures, I sat in the back corner of the sports center used by the Shalahuddin Community as the headquarters for its activities. I believed that it was better late than never. My zeal to follow the lectures steadily increased, parallel with the unfailing support I received from my colleagues in that community.²²

Having been active in the Shalahuddin Community, one of the most important centers of the *Tarbiya* (education) movement in Yogyakarta, F. Abu Ahmad joined what was later recognized as the Muslim Brotherhood. But he claimed that he was not satisfied with that movement because its religious doctrines lacked proper grounding in references from the Qur'an and Sunna. Two years before Laskar Jihad was born, he joined the Salafi movement.

Similar experiences were recounted by a dozen other fighters, including the main lieutenants of Laskar Jihad, such as Ayip Syafruddin, Ma'ruf Bahrin, Hardi Ibnu Harun, Eko Raharjo, Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad and Adib Susanto. Like F. Abu Ahmad, their interest in Islam also began to grow in the first or second semester of their term at a university, after they had become acquainted with the activists representing Islamic movements popular on the campus. This process led them to join the Muslim Brotherhood, the Hizb al-Tahrir, the NII movement, or even the Tablighi Jama'at, which throughout its history has been relatively apolitical. Through their engagement, they became acquainted with Salafi activism and eventually decided to act themselves. In general, they claimed their move was inspired by their admiration for Salafi doctrines, which they believed offered a more solid foundation for an understanding of true Islam.²³

The importance of pre-existing social networks and interpersonal bonds is more remarkably demonstrated by the case of Abdurrahman Abu Hamzah. He comes from a peasant family in Boyolali. After completing senior high school, he followed in the footsteps of his elder brother by continuing his studies at the State University Sebelas Maret in Solo. There, he lodged with his brother in a small room of a rented house shared with other students. It came as a surprise to him to learn that his brother was an activist in the NII movement and was organizing secret cells. In the beginning, he claims that he was not interested in invitations to attend secret religious lectures organized by his brother or his brother's companions:

²² Interview with F. Abu Ahmad, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

²³ Interviews with Ayip Syafruddin, Ma'ruf Bahrin, Hardi Ibnu Harun, Eko Raharjo, Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad, and Adib Susanto on different occasions in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

I only attended when the lecture was held in my own rented house. At that time they discussed an issue of *tawhid* (to accept and believe in the oneness of God and his absolute authority), on the basis of which they criticized the religious conviction of other Muslims. My interest grew greater and greater in tandem with the increasingly persistent attempts made by my brother and his companions to involve me in all the religious lectures they organized. As I attended lectures more frequently, my curiosity about the doctrines underpinning their religious conviction continued to grow and this made me conscious of the mistakes I had committed.²⁴

Abdurrahman Abu Hamzah eventually dedicated his life to NII activism, but later ended his association with that group and shifted into the Salafi movement partly because he was tired of the clandestine nature of the former.

An examination of pre-existing social and religious networks and interpersonal bonds reveals how fighters from the same families often became engaged in the Laskar Jihad missions to the Moluccas. For instance, one of the young men I interviewed, M. Fathullah, traveled to the Moluccas with his younger brother, A. Rahman. The latter joined the Salafi movement because of his elder brother's persistent persuasion and subsequently transformed himself into a dedicated follower. Less than one year after his engagement with the group, he decided to enlist with Laskar Jihad fighters going to the Moluccas. His decision inspired his elder brother to do the same.²⁵

In some cases, the establishment of networks and interpersonal bonds appears to have been accidental. For example, M. Haris ibn Mas'ud, a fighter from Magelang, who was born into a mixed family of Muslims, Roman Catholics, and Hindus, related how his engagement with Islamic activism began in an accidental encounter with a group of Salafis in a mosque near his rented house:

It was during the first semester of my enrollment in the Electrical Engineering Department of Gadjah Mada University. At that time, since I was bored staying all the time in a small rented room, I was suddenly moved by a desire to participate in a collective prayer in a mosque near my house. When I went to al-Hasanah mosque, I met by chance some Salafis who had just completed their study session on Islam. This is how I got to know some of them and became engaged in a discussion. This discussion apparently impressed me very much. I began to think seriously about several points they had emphasized, particularly in relation to the question of *tawhid*. After that, I began actively attending collective prayers in the same mosque, and consequently my friendship with the Salafis grew closer. I visited them in their houses, or some of them visited me in my house. At every meeting we discussed various religious issues in depth.²⁶

Another fighter, Muhammad Ali Akbar, joined the Salafi movement after he completed research on their doctrine for a writing assignment. Member of a Muhammadiyah family, he was a student in Chemical Engineering at Gadjah Mada

²⁴ Interview with Abdurrahman Abu Hamzah, Solo, December 2002.

²⁵ Interview with M. Fathullah and A. Rahman, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

²⁶ Interview with M. Haris ibn Mas'ud, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

University, and the paper was assigned by his lecturer in religious instruction who happened to have experience as an activist of the *Tarbiya* movement:

Because of the nature of this assignment, I was forced to become active in listening to Salafi lectures organized in Degolan. My curiosity about this movement developed in line with the frequency of my attendance at the lectures. I benefited from the teachings discussed in the lectures because everything was based on the Qur'an and Sunna. In addition, I had the opportunity to get to know some of Salafis personally, and I debated with them about some aspects of Islam. I eventually decided to become an active member of the movement after I had been convinced of its truth.²⁷

This pattern was repeated among Laskar Jihad fighters from non-university backgrounds, who found that encounters with Salafis spurred their commitment to join the fold. For those young men who were not students, economic considerations also played a significant role. Abdul Fatah, a fighter from an *abangan* peasant family in Semarang, said that he had intended to continue his studies at university after completing high school, but his plans were frustrated by his parents' limited economic resources. He went to Jakarta to find a job and shared a rented room with a friend from the same village who worked in a discotheque. Through this friend he became acquainted with the nightclub life of the metropolitan city. He became a bartender in a discotheque and pursued this work for about three years before deciding to quit and return to his native village for reasons that he himself seemed reluctant to describe:

Having no job, I was persuaded by one of my old colleagues studying at Diponegoro University to attend religious lectures in a mosque near the university. Initially I turned down this invitation. But his enthusiasm to convince me of the significance of the lectures never flagged. Prompted by a desire not to disappoint the friend, I eventually attended a lecture, in which a Salafi *ustadh* (religious teacher) gave the talks. This introduction fired my curiosity about Islam. I was won over by the lecture's magnetism. As a result, I started visiting various places where such lectures were given. For me, learning about Islam, after having first ventured into the nightclub life, was initially very frustrating. You can imagine, how difficult it was; from a glamorous life in Jakarta to a plain Salafi life in Semarang. But I survived thanks to the enthusiastic support of my Salafi friends.²⁸

Muhammad Sodik, a fighter from Yogyakarta, also joined the movement following the loss of a job, but in his case the transition was a relief rather than a challenge since his experiences as a worker had been discouraging. He recounts that after having completed studies at a Senior Technical High School, he could not find the job he wanted and found this very hard to accept. As the eldest son of a poor family, he had to support his parents. His life changed when he found a job in an electronics factory in Batam, an industrial island near Singapore, in 1994. He worked there for about four years, but he was dismissed in 1998 following the Asian

²⁷ Interview with Muhammad Ali Akbar, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

²⁸ Interview with Abdul Fatah, Semarang, February 2003.

economic crisis. He moved to Pekanbaru to look for another job, but all he found there was trouble. His savings evaporated. As he described his experience:

At that critical moment, a friend I had just met a few days before persuaded me to attend a religious lecture in a mosque near my rented room. There I was introduced to the Salafi movement and persuaded to join. Initially I had not been interested in it at all. But after that, several times a week I went to the mosque and joined collective prayers. Sometimes I heard the religious lectures they organized after the collective prayers. After the lectures, I was usually asked about my opinion of the lectures. Debates and discussions frequently arose among us. To convince me, they provided me with some editions of the journal *Salafy*. In this way my understanding of Salafi doctrines developed very fast. Initially I found it an extremely difficult task, so I nearly gave up. But thanks to the support of the Salafi friends I met there, I survived and quickly succeeded in transforming myself into a dedicated Salafi.²⁹

REBORN AS TRUE MUSLIMS

For these people, becoming acquainted with Islam later in life had its own consequences. They became directly involved in strict Islam, reinforced by the zeal of militancy. As we have noted earlier, since the mid-1980s, university campuses have witnessed an Islamic resurgence in which the Salafi movement, in conjunction with other Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb al-Tahrir, and NII, has exerted a great deal of influence. The Islam these young men studied, therefore, was Islam inspired by the thinking of fundamentalist ideologues such as Banna, Qutb, Mawdudi, Shariati, and Khomeini, or of their predecessors, Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab.

In contrast to traditional Islam, this so-called campus Islam entails doctrines and beliefs that are literal and relatively coherent, centered on the contrast between *shirk* (polytheism) and *tawhid*. Being introduced to Islam in this manner was in many instances a shocking experience to people who had little previous knowledge about the religion. They were faced with a choice between black and white. According to their teachers, to reject the call to Islam means to remain an infidel. But if they were already locked in this logic, it would not be easy for them to escape. This rigid logic appealed particularly to scientific and technical students trained in the framework of mathematical formulas. As they strove to conform to the precepts of orthodox Islam, their zeal to learn more about Islam was reinforced through *halqas* and *dauras*.

Those who were introduced to Islam in this manner usually tried hard to disassociate themselves quickly from their village past. They typically described the years prior to their conversion as their *jahiliyya* (pagan ignorance) period, which they said had been dominated by the sins of *shirk* and *bid'a* (reprehensible innovations), and they regretted that the light of true Islam came so late to their villages:

When I still lived in my village I did not know that the Islam practiced by my villagers was full of *shirk* and *bid'a*. How could they possibly claim that they were Muslims while they did not refrain from visiting tombs, organizing

²⁹ Interview with Muhammad Sodik, Yogyakarta, November 1, 2001.

slametans, and making offerings under big trees? Why should they worship tombs and trees which can do nothing to help? This is their own stupidity.³⁰

These recruits usually criticized their own past religious convictions and generally agreed that, although they had been nominally registered as Muslims as soon as they were born, they did not actually become Muslims until the true light of Islam shone on them:

After I realized that I did not deserve to claim that I was a Muslim, because of my past haunted by *shirk*, I worked hard to study Islam. This is because of the fact that my religious conviction was still very superficial. At that time, I could not recite the Qur'an correctly, and consequently, was not able to perform prayers properly. I think the prayers that I had sometimes performed before did not make any sense, because I did not perform them correctly in the light of references in the Qur'an and Sunna.³¹

This sort of consciousness encouraged them to study Islam seriously. Even when faced with great difficulties, they always seemed enthusiastic to embark on a study of how to recite the Qur'an and how to perform the ablutions (*wudu'*) and prayers (*salat*) properly. Those who could already recite the Qur'an still felt it necessary to improve their skills. Their failures to pronounce some letters of the Arabic alphabet, such as *`ayn*, correctly, embarrassed them. Among Javanese, *`ayn* is usually pronounced as *ngain*. To polish up their pronunciation, they eagerly listened to cassettes of Qur'an recitation (*murattal*) by well-known reciters from Saudi Arabia; these recordings were available everywhere, from traditional markets to luxurious modern supermarkets. As a result of the Islamic resurgence that has made religious symbols an important social indicator, such commodities have gained popularity and prominence in Indonesia.

In the next stage of this conversion process, initiates adopted a new, Arab-style costume and let their beards grow long. This move was usually accompanied by a commitment to distance themselves from their previous environment. They felt that, by doing so, they could more readily assert their claim to be true Muslims. Subsequently, they usually traded their Javanese (*abangan*) names for Arabic (Islamic) ones. Names like Sutarto, Hartono, Raharjo, Suryanto, Haryanto, Sumarjono, and Wardoyo were replaced by Ahmad Haris, Muhammad Chalid, Abdullah, Abdul Wahhab, Hamzah, Ibn Usman, and Ibn Rasyid. When they got married and had children, they would adopt their children's Arabic names and insert "Abu" before them, becoming Abu Khalid, Abu Ahmad, Abu Mash'ab, and Abu Sulaiman. This process of dissociation from tradition tends to occur quickly.

When asked to explain this decision, they argued that as Muslims they should practice the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad consistently. From their point of view, the adoption of a new name indicated a person's commitment to implement the Sunna. They insisted that their new names had been used by the *Salaf al-Salih* in the early period of Islam. Others acknowledged that the newly adopted names were "the names of the *hijra*," an echo of Qutb's idea. They asserted that the move from the *jahiliyya* culture dominated by *shirk* and *bid'a* into a genuine Islamic culture should

³⁰ Interview with Abdul Walid ibn Musa, Jakarta, October 2001.

³¹ Interview with Muhammad Abu Ihsan, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

be total, and taking on an Arabic name signaled a person's commitment to leave the *jahiliyya* culture.³² At the same time, they tried hard to use as many Arabic terms as possible in their daily conversations. They usually preferred, for instance, to call their friends by the terms *akhi* (brother) or *ukhti* (sister) or the plural *ikhwan* (brothers) or *akhawat* (sisters).

An initiate's growing consciousness of his need to separate from *abangan* society does not necessarily happen only among those who migrate to cities in order to find better lives. In some instances, this phenomenon has occurred among the *abangan* in their own villages. This might be explained by the increasing number of Muslim preachers attached to Muslim organizations who have devoted themselves to organizing religious lectures in remote areas. In one way or another, this increase in the number of active proselytizers has succeeded in paving the way for the inclusion of *abangan* villages in orthodox Islam, and this development has in turn created a rural demand for Islamist activists prepared to organize secret cells or build Islamic teaching centers. Doubtless, this expansion has to do with the *santris'* attempts to contain the mass conversion of "ex-communist" *abangan* people to Christianity and Hinduism, a process originally sparked by Suharto's campaign against communism, as noted earlier.

In this regard, it is of interest to note what happened in Pakisan, a village located in densely populated hill country twenty-five kilometers to the north of the town of Wonosobo. It is one of the villages on the Dieng Plateau, lying 2,093 meters above sea level. On a nearby hill, there is a well-known site that encompasses a number of Hindu temples. To reach this hill, one must take a steep, winding road. Public transport is extremely limited. Passengers have to wait in the Wonosobo terminal for two to three hours before old minibuses pick them up. Significantly, along the way to the Hindu temple site there are a dozen mosques on either side of the road. There are also offices, schools, a health clinic that belongs to the Muhammadiyah, and several offices and a *pesantren* affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama. The atmosphere of competition between the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama in this location is palpable. The population of Wonosobo is generally known for its allegiance to the Nahdlatul Ulama.

The Muhammadiyah was the first organization to concern itself with Islamizing the Dieng Plateau's *abangan* people. This effort only began to show results in the mid-1980s, precisely when the village leader of Pakisan began to support Muhammadiyah activities. He was an affluent businessman who owned a large area of farmland and controlled a number of guesthouses on the hill. On his initiative, a mosque and *musallas* were built.³³ Supported by this village leader, Muhammad Adib, a Muhammadiyah preacher who also served as a teacher in an Islamic school, organized religious lectures in the mosque. He was a graduate of the Tarbiya Faculty of the Sunan Kalijaga State Institute of Islamic Studies in Yogyakarta.³⁴ The Dieng's *abangan* residents rapidly became interested in studying Islam, keeping pace with the intensification of the *da'wa* activities carried out by Muhammad Adib.

In the early 1990s, Muhammad Adib began to feel that the Muhammadiyah no longer represented the true, pristine Islam. He has claimed that he started feeling this way after he made the acquaintance of some Salafi *ustadhs* who led him to obtain a

³² Interviews with Abdullah al-Ghifari and Abu Rufaidah, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

³³ Interview with Sutarto Abu Muaz, Wonosobo, January 2003.

³⁴ Interview with Muhammad Adib, Wonosobo, January 2003.

deeper understanding of Salafi doctrines. He became eager to go to Solo, Yogyakarta, and other cities to participate in the *halqas* and *dauras* organized by Abu Nida, Thalib, Jawwas, and Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, and eventually decided to become a dedicated supporter of the Salafi *da'wa* movement. He had no difficulty in finding followers, as he had earned a reputation as an accomplished preacher in Wonosobo. He only needed to adjust the contents of his lectures to conform to Salafi doctrine. Circles of his dedicated Salafi followers quickly formed in several places where he had already had great influence.

The influence of the Salafi *da'wa* movement organized by Muhammad Adib reached Pakisan, too. Through religious lectures delivered regularly in a mosque, he succeeded in convincing the Pakisan people to adhere to Islam totally. In about three years, almost half of the five hundred families transformed themselves into Salafis, and more than thirty of them joined the Laskar Jihad mission in the Moluccas. Interestingly, they have remained modest farmers or agricultural laborers working every day on ex-plantation farmland owned by affluent businessmen, planting potatoes, carrots, cabbages, and other vegetable crops. But one hour before the noon prayer, these believers usually rush home to take a bath, don the *jalabiyya*, and go to the mosque. The conversion of the Pakisan people to Salafism appears in many instances to have involved the conversion of whole families, though it was not always the head of each family who led the conversion—the eldest son was more often the catalyst. Interestingly, although they live in a comparatively remote area, the Salafis of the Dieng Plateau are as fluent as their Yogyakarta counterparts in discussing various aspects of Salafi doctrines. They are particularly concerned with *al-wala wa'l-bara* (show solidarity with believers, reject infidels), *hizbiyya* (political participation), *jahiliyya*, *hijra*, and above all *shirk* and *bid'a*.³⁵

Events in Pakisan parallel, to some extent, events that took place in Besuki Hill, thirty kilometers to the east of the city of Malang, East Java. In that case, which was studied by Robert Hefner, villagers adhering to the syncretistic Buda religion were converted to Islam. By the mid-1960s, when *santri-abangan* tension was still palpable throughout Java in the wake of the mass killings of alleged communists after the aborted coup of 1965, the Besuki area witnessed rapid Islamization marked by the emergence of Islamic social, educational, and political institutions. A new village chief who was elected in 1968 accelerated this process. Because of his initiative, a new mosque, eight new prayer houses, and a primary school were built, an initiative that apparently encouraged villagers to associate themselves with Islam. Using this case as evidence, Hefner proposes a hypothesis that religion is a social institution that depends upon a particular social and political configuration. He suggests that a change in religious culture is related to "the construction of political institutions under which some meanings would be shared and others denied."³⁶

In his analysis, Hefner argues that the expansion of Islam, a world religion, in the Besuki area disrupted the Buda people's consciousness of cosmology because the generalized doctrines and cosmologies typically propagated by world religions, such as Islam, which focus on a supreme deity (high cosmology) tend to overpower cults

³⁵ Interview with Hartono Abu Hafiz, Ahmad Sabaruddin and Sutarto Abu Muaz, Wonosobo, January 2003.

³⁶ Robert Hefner, "Islamic Conversion in Modern East Java," in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse*, ed. William R. Roff (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 76.

that worship territorial and ancestral spirits (low cosmology). Borrowing Geertz's analysis of Bali, Hefner proposes that doctrines and beliefs that are more abstract, more logically coherent, and more generally phrased function to maintain a meaningful tie between man and the removed divine in the modern world:

Cosmological change does not occur because religion and cosmology are symbolic "replicators" of some more primary social field, but because, in moving out into an expanded world, people confront a whole host of intellectual problems for which the old cosmology, tailored to the demands of a familiar small-scale society, is no longer sufficient. Only a less particular, more generalizable cosmology is capable of meeting the intellectual challenge of daily life.³⁷

IDENTITY SHAKEN BY THE WAVES OF MODERNIZATION

There is no doubt that the phenomenon under consideration is inexorably associated with the waves of modernization taking place in Indonesia in the last few decades. Since Suharto came to power in 1966, Indonesia has been caught up in the government's attempts to accelerate the process of modernization and development. To achieve this purpose, the government initiated *Pelita*, the five-year planned development program, in 1969. One of the most important goals of New Order development was to increase the rate of literacy, which motivated the government to spend large amounts of money on the infrastructural development of primary schools. New schools were constructed across the entire archipelago, enabling villages to have full access to basic education. Since 1974, primary school education has been compulsory for children between the ages seven and twelve. In making education more affordable, attractive, and accessible, the new system also brought absenteeism under control.³⁸ As a result, between 1965 and the early 1990s, the percentage of young adults with basic literacy skills rose from about 40 percent to 90 percent.³⁹

In order to absorb the number of children finishing primary school, the government was forced to set up new junior and senior high schools as well. These schools were no longer confined to cities and large towns, which were difficult for villagers to reach; they were also built in small towns near villages in remote areas. In response to this availability, the numbers of young people attending junior high and senior high school rose significantly from year to year. Keeping pace with the improvement in societal economic prosperity, the ambition of the pupils finishing senior high school to continue their studies at the university level also increased. This spurred an the increase in participation in higher education. Over the years, more and more people from small rural villages have enrolled in modern schools and universities in large urban areas such as Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Makassar.

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 70-71.

³⁸ B. Leigh, "Learning and Knowing Boundaries: Schooling in New Order Indonesia," *Sojourn* 14,1 (1999): 34-56.

³⁹ Gavin W. Jones and Chris Manning, "Labour Force and Employment during the 1980s," in *The Oil Boom and After: Indonesian Economic Policy and Performance in the Soeharto Era*, ed. Anne Booth (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 363-410.

Simultaneously, the Islamic resurgence became increasingly prominent in cities and gradually reached the countryside, where the government was building streets, bridges, electrical power stations, and local health care centers. This infrastructure reduced the isolation of villages and led to the rise of the market economy and a new wave of urbanization. As a result, the living conditions of most villagers have improved significantly since the 1960s. Hal Hill notes a substantial increase in real GDP per capita from US\$190 in 1965 to US\$570 twenty years later.⁴⁰ The increase has enabled villagers to purchase luxury consumer goods, such as radios and televisions, whose introduction into the countryside inevitably incorporated villagers into the global world, prompting a new pattern of life and introducing the consumerism associated with the global capitalist economy.

Ironically, while the scope of such individual freedoms increased, resources remained insufficient, and this development has been accompanied by an intensified presence of the state in almost all spheres of the everyday life of villagers. Village headmen have been the most important actors facilitating this intervention by the state. In the New Order era, headmen were members of the state-party, Golkar, and were thereby incorporated into the national bureaucracy. Through them, the government penetrated and maintained tight control over village activities. A number of institutions at the village level were created, including the Village Assembly (*Lembaga Musyawarah Desa*) and the Village Community Resilience Board (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa*), to guarantee the loyalty of villagers to the government.⁴¹ In the process of New Order development, the state emerged as the dominant authority, replacing traditional forms.

At the same time, the growing opportunities for youths coming from either small country towns and rural areas or from the urban lower-middle classes to migrate to big cities for a better education have created certain problems that continue to trouble those young people who make the attempt. In contrast to the students from the urban upper-middle class, those from rural areas usually do not receive sufficient support from their families to enable them to cope with the heavy burdens of living as university students in the cities. Forced to rely on their own resources, they shoulder not only academic burdens but also responsibility for their own basic living costs and tuition fees. Hampered by economic constraints, they are prevented from enjoying the "real" campus life that remains the prerogative of affluent students. Some have been forced to board in cramped quarters with limited facilities, located on narrow streets.

Those students who migrate to large cities to achieve social mobility through higher education have been followed by many other village youths who have no hopes of undertaking a university education. Attracted by portrayals of cities disseminated by electronic media (most notably television), these youths come to find jobs. In the cities, they have formed something resembling a new proletariat class, trying their luck by working as factory laborers, petty traders, shopkeepers, tailors, or artisans. They usually live very simply because of their ambition to transfer as much money as possible to their families in the countryside or to save for the future.

⁴⁰ Hal Hill, "The Economy," *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation*, ed. Hal Hill (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), p. 57.

⁴¹ See Hans Antlov, *Exemplary Centre, Administrative Periphery: Rural Leadership and the New Order in Java* (London: Curzon Press, 1995), p. 28.

These two segments of newly urbanized youths who come from slightly different social backgrounds have proven to be easy targets for Islamic movements. By migrating to urban settings that strike them as unfriendly and intimidating, these people have become detached from the community of their villages. This heightens their sensitivity to psychological shocks and weakens their ability to deal with them. They have been used to living in a relatively easy manner within the bounds of a community whose members could easily communicate with one another. Kinship ties are particularly useful in providing solidarity and protection, and their ubiquitous presence in a village means that problems are not carried on a single individual's shoulders, but resolved collectively. In cities, on the other hand, a person is forced to live independently in relative isolation.

The reality of a big city sharply contrasts with the place they dreamed of before arriving. They are forced to live in overcrowded urban neighborhoods that the state has failed to organize either with respect to infrastructure or in terms of cultural or political structures. In many instances, cities mercilessly expose the inequities of a society. As urban areas explode, the poor face housing shortages and inadequate transportation, while the affluent live in luxurious houses and drive luxury cars, mimicking Western modes of dress and social behavior without paying attention to less fortunate residents who are struggling to meet their basic needs.

Cities entice by offering displays of unattainable modern luxuries in the shop windows of stores located in vast impersonal super- or hyper-markets. Expensive Western-style clothing, accessories, make-up, televisions, computers, motorcycles, and cars are flashed in front of youths who had hitherto rarely dreamed of touching them. A few steps from the supermarkets, fast-food restaurants offer an American menu. The uneasiness created by these frustrating encounters with inaccessible consumer goods, an uneasiness that tends to increase as these youths feel their roots to a familiar rural life shriveling, has undoubtedly added an extra, bitter dimension to the problems they face in adjusting to the new atmosphere of the city.

It is apparent that the inequitable conditions that pervade the cities has disturbed the *habitus* of the newly urbanized youths. *Habitus* is a concept introduced by Pierre Bourdieu to refer to a "system of durable, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions*, *and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks..." Bourdieu contends that people experience a particularly comfortable sense of place through sharing a *habitus*.⁴² Craig Calhoun points out that one of the crucial features of *habitus* in traditional societies is that it radically limits the range of options available to rational actors. From his point of view, every increase in a person's range of options creates greater complexity and unpredictability for a person's decision-making, a circumstance which is antithetical to the maintenance of stable traditional patterns of social relations.⁴³

Exacerbating the feeling of dispossession is the climate of widespread corruption, economic stagnation, and bureaucratic incompetence. The government has seemingly failed to balance the supply of and demand for workers, engendering rising competition in job markets. Consequently, the problems faced by the newly urbanized youths have accumulated at a dizzying rate. Unbalanced relations

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 72.

⁴³ Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 152.

between employers and employees often claim victims among workers; they can be easily fired without any proper compensation. To university students, this overcharged job market has raised concerns about their future. They are haunted by the fact that many university graduates cannot easily find jobs. Indeed, because of extremely limited employment opportunities, the number of unemployed diploma holders increases each year. This problem is not confined to students of the social sciences but is likewise prevalent among those in the scientific and engineering fields.

The new urban life, dominated by the accoutrements of advanced capitalism, has marginalized some segments of society, particularly those whose hopes have been inflated by promises concerning the fruits of development, repeatedly voiced by the government. Their resulting disorientation makes them sensitive to genuine social crisis, to use Habermas's term, which disturbs two independent levels of societal integration: system integration and social integration. The former refers to the technical challenge of meeting the material needs of survival and social reproduction through work and production, and the latter has to do with the practical challenge of providing normative order, stable social identities and symbolic meaning and purpose in one's "lifeworld."⁴⁴

Habermas's analysis of the ways a lifeworld may be colonized adds a dimension to our understanding of this dynamic. As discussed before, his colonization thesis outlines how system imperatives impose the generalized media of money and power on a cultural lifeworld of symbolic meanings, cultural traditions, and socialization patterns. The result is that intrapersonal and interpersonal foundations of identity consciousness and social interactions are distorted and detached from their communicative, rational foundation.⁴⁵ This theory is criticized by Craig Calhoun, who finds it overly critical of "the system" and simplistic in the way it idealizes the lifeworld. Calhoun sees no sharp demarcation between the lifeworld and the system; in his opinion, the people's divergent ways of understanding the social world are simply determined by their experience in modern life.⁴⁶

Habermas's theory clearly delineates how, in a traditional society, identity is granted once and is therefore fixed, timeless, and immutable, while in a modern, global society identity can be gained and lost, depending on individual volition and accomplishment. In short, as a result of modernization, identity has been relativized. As a consequence, new social movements have arisen in different parts of the world, providing avenues for the development of new values and identities, as well as novel interpretations of social life, and these then represent the main vehicles by which communicative rationality can be brought into public life. Habermas argues that the rise of new social movements has to do with the struggle to define relationships in the context of the emergence of new forms of instrumental and communicative knowledge as well as of economic and social changes.⁴⁷

In modern, global society, the relativization of identity can undermine the more conventional anchors of social life that provide a measure of stability, and this makes the quest for individual identity a central pursuit of modern life. As a source of meaning for social actors, identity organizes meaning by determining how the

⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 2-5.

⁴⁵ Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, pp. 341-42.

⁴⁶ Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory*, p. 207.

⁴⁷ Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, pp. 391-96.

purpose of certain actions is symbolically identified. Alberto Melucci refers to the "homelessness of personal identity" when describing the sort of alienation people experience when identities are relativized, and he proposes that this condition requires individuals to reestablish their identity and thus their "home" continually.⁴⁸ In a similar analysis, Castells suggests that identity has become a driving force in contemporary world history, which has been shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization.⁴⁹ He goes on to say that the need to reconstruct an identity shaken by the swift current of social change encourages global, modern people to return to a primary identity established by working on "traditional materials in the formation of a new godly, communal world, where deprived masses and disaffected intellectuals may reconstruct meaning in a global alternative to the exclusionary global order." By doing so, according to Castells, these people challenge a globalized, homogenized "McWorld" identity that esteems the ideology of individualism and the capacity for material consumption. From his point of view, the manifestations of religious fundamentalism witnessed across the world are reflections of a surge of widespread expressions on behalf of cultural singularity.⁵⁰

In fact, when crisis was increasingly felt among different segments of Indonesian society, Islamic movements operating under the banner of the *Tarbiya* movement mentioned above gained ground. They offered a solution and set the stage for the increasing importance of Islam as a pillar of Indonesian identity at the urban level and as a basis for organization. Through *halqas* and *dauras*, Islamic movements introduced a new view of Islam that emphasized the formalization of religious expressions and provided a channel through which basic social and political questions could be articulated in a new way. The need for this sort of alternative channel has continued to increase in tandem with the rapid advance of globalization.

Within this context, the influence of Islamic movements grew rapidly. Their messages articulated people's dissatisfaction and frustration. Articulation of such feelings mainly took place in discussions, when participants sought to understand and contextualize the thoughts of the most significant Islamist ideologues. They questioned their own fate, while dreaming of the supremacy of an Islamic system. Of course, not all students were interested in participating. But a significant number dared to neglect their work as university students in order to devote themselves to these activities.

ENCLAVE

In the recent contribution by Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, the authors identify the call to return to a primary identity as key to the central agenda of diverse contemporary religious fundamentalist movements (Christian, Islam and Jewish). These authors make use of the term "enclave" as an apt label for such communities and describe this powerful drive to stabilize group identity as "the primary impulse that lies behind the rise of the tradition so as to

⁴⁸ Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 109.

⁴⁹ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

forestall the danger of being sucked into the vortex of modernity."⁵¹ They suggest that in so-called "enclave culture," fundamentalists usually construct a "wall of virtue" based on moral values. This wall separates the saved, free, and morally superior enclave from the hitherto tempting central community. The enclave situates the oppressive and morally defiled outside society, perceived to occupy a polluted, contagious and dangerous territory, in sharp contrast with the community of virtuous insiders.⁵²

"Enclave" is related to the question of space in its symbolic and social meanings. The enclave occupies a separate space, in which individual members conform to homogeneous public norms. In this respect, behavior, language, and dress codes are strictly regulated and serve as the most important emblems distinguishing the faithful from outsiders. Strictness is aimed at dictating a semblance of order because of the gravity of danger imposed by the outside. Here lies the importance of authority: it is a guide that steers individual members.⁵³ To these authors, "the end product of the imposition of fundamentalist norms is a strong claim on individual members' 'operational time' as lived as a group (not individual resource)."⁵⁴

In the case of the Salafi movement, the attempt to impose a strict, exclusive pattern of life on the faithful is manifested primarily in the tendency of the movement's members to set themselves distinctly apart from the society around them. They are convinced that a pure Islamic community free from the stains of the modern world must be established if the triumph of Islam is to be revived. Within this exclusive system they adopt a distinctive pattern of behavior, language, dress, and social relationships. According to a Salafi *ustadh*, the pattern of behavior, language, and dress is something determinant and fixed:

Whether someone is a true believer or not can be seen from his behavior, language and dress. A faithful Muslim must behave like the *Salaf al-Salih*, speak in the language of the Qur'an and the Sunna and wear Islamic dress such as *jalabiyaa* in order to distinguish himself from infidels. *Man tashabbaha bi qawm fa huwa minhum* [Whoever resembles a (infidel) group, he belongs to that group].⁵⁵

While emphasizing the importance of adherence to a distinctive faith, morality, and lifestyle, the movement condemns deviance, shuns dissenters, and repudiates the outside world. They argue that the outside is the *jahiliyya* world full of *shirk* and *bid'a*.

In order to follow this exclusive pattern of behavior, members must make sacrifices, not only by denying themselves certain pleasures and opportunities but also by risking social stigmatization. In place of Western-style shirts or trendy blouses, for instance, they must wear robes or *niqab*. Young men are even obliged to let their beards grow long messily. At the same time, they are subject to numerous restrictions; they are not allowed to smoke, watch television, or listen to music. In

⁵¹ Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World* (Chicago, IL, and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-37.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-50.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵⁵ Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

line with their increasingly close attachment to the movement, their contacts with family and friends are minimized. They are forced to devote their time, energy, and even lives solely to the interests of the movement. Although these conditions all sound irrational, costly, and unproductive, the cohesiveness of the movement always seems strong. Members remain active and fully committed to myriad activities organized by the movement, and new adherents continue to join.

Utilizing an economic-rational model, Iannaccone theorizes that a strict religious organization's ability to maintain the loyalty of followers is determined by the willingness of the followers to accept the high costs of participation in exchange for certain rewards. These costs are themselves effective, since they can help eliminate the "free-riding" problems associated with collective action and screen out people whose participation otherwise would be marginal, while at the same time increasing participation among those who remain. The level of participation and the level of sacrifice are thus correlated. As a logical consequence, the adherents' engagement and productivity can increase when apparently unproductive sacrifices are required. Ironically, unproductive sacrifice itself makes the organization attractive. Here the law of market economics has an effect; the more scarce (and consequently more difficult to acquire) a commodity is, the more attractive it becomes, and the more people desire it. Iannaccone concludes that religious groups demanding sacrifice and stigmatization effectively limit participation in competing activities, and that such voluntarily isolated groups are bound to display fundamental behavioral similarities independent of their differences in history, theology, and organization.⁵⁶

Elaborating on this thesis, Iannaccone argues that successful strictness must involve the sacrifice of external (non-group) resources and opportunities that the group can itself replace. In other words, a group can afford to prohibit or put out of reach only those commodities for which it offers a close substitute. Through these substitute commodities, members of the group can therefore enjoy the benefits of their participation and forget their sacrifices. He insists that arbitrary strictness will fail just as surely as excessive strictness. In this sense, cults and communes that isolate members geographically, for instance, must provide an internal productive economy based on farming, manufacture, and trade. Likewise, sects that isolate their members socially must provide alternative social networks with ample opportunities for interactions, friendships, and status.⁵⁷

It should be noted, however, that by seeking a rational explanation for the factors that motivate some people to sustain their committed participation in a strict religious organization, regardless of the costs, Iannaccone leaves the roots of the problem unexamined. One's decision to join a strict religious organization is certainly not spontaneous, but is the result of a long process of "negotiation." In order to understand this process, we must return to the issue of identity, which turns on the interrelated problems of a person's self-recognition and recognition by others. Recognition is vital to any reflexivity, for example, any capacity to look at oneself, to choose one's actions and see their consequences, and to hope to improve oneself. This component of recognition may be the aspect of identity made most problematic by the social changes of modernity.

⁵⁶ Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives," *Journal of Political Economy* 100,2 (1992): 271-91.

⁵⁷ Iannaccone, "Why Strict Churches are Strong," pp. 1203-04.

The emphasis on a distinctive lifestyle in the enclave culture is clearly associated with the problem of identity. When a person feels that his identity has been shaken, he needs to consolidate it. This can be done by, for instance, joining a particular, exclusive movement. In such a movement, a member's pride in being different is emphasized and a sense of certainty reached. Certainty is particularly crucial for the consolidation of an identity that has been disrupted by the excesses of modernization and globalization. It is not surprising that the impulse to seek certainty is the driving force behind a person's consent to sacrifice and suffer from social stigma.

In the case of the Salafis associated with Laskar Jihad, certainty is apparent in the way they organize their lives. The collectivity the group offers is appealing, as members stress the need to gather at every opportunity, particularly at prayer times. They usually wake up early in the morning and soon after take a bath. They then go to a mosque, or *musalla*, to perform a morning prayer collectively. The *musalla* does not always belong to them. In many instances, they symbolically take control of a *musalla* where they live and make it the center of all their activities. This way of operating automatically consigns local people to the sidelines. After morning prayer, participants usually listen to a *ta'lim*, a religious lecture.

Around eight o'clock in the morning they embark on economically productive activities. Most of them work in small-scale trading. They may sell rice, vegetable oil, vegetables, honey, books, lamps, cakes, alcohol-free perfume, and Islamic garments, some of which are the products of cottage industries. As long as a certain commodity is sold by a member, other members of the enclave will not try to purchase it from outside vendors. Vendors who belong to the enclave usually have steady costumers for their commodities. This productive activity is only carried on for a few hours. One hour before the noon prayer, members go home and straightaway prepare themselves to go to the *musalla*. After the noon prayer, some of them continue their trading activities until the afternoon prayer, at which time they return to the *musalla* to perform that prayer, which is usually followed by another *ta'lim*. As darkness approaches, they gather in the *musalla* to perform the sunset prayer. Some remain in the mosque until they finish performing the evening prayer.

A sense of certainty is also applied in terms of pairing. Those who feel ready to get married are advised to go to their *ustadh* and tell him of their intentions. Usually, the *ustadh* will give his wife(s) the task of finding a girl ready for marriage. Through the mediation of the *ustadh* and his wife(s), a meeting (*nadar*) between the future bride and bridegroom is arranged. At that meeting, the would-be bride is allowed to see the face of the would-be bridegroom in the presence of their mediators. The marriage contract will be drawn up soon after an agreement is reached between the two parties. To confirm the engagement, the bride and groom come to the *ustadh* to declare the marriage contract in the presence of several dozen Salafis. Economic self-sufficiency is not required at all. As long as the future bride feels prepared mentally, the marriage can soon take place.⁵⁸ The *ustadh* feels sinful if he fails to find a partner for a would-be marriage candidate. In normal cases, a young man who wants to get married is required to be able to support his future household economically, or at least to have enough money to pay for the dowry and wedding party.

Normally, this new couple hopes to have a baby as soon as possible. Salafis do not accept the idea of family planning, which they perceive as a strategy promulgated by infidels to weaken manpower among Muslims. As soon as the first

⁵⁸ Interview with Abu Sulaiman, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

son or daughter is born, the couple will seek to have the second child and then the third and so on. In general, their ambition is to have as many children as possible. These children will grow up in the enclave and be protected from influences from the outside. They will be taught how to live as Salafis and be sent to Islamic teaching centers that belong to Salafis. From an adherents' perspective, sending children to the centers gives multiple benefits; the children are taught to understand Islamic teachings properly and comprehensively, and, at the same time, to comprehend what it means to live as dedicated Salafis. More importantly, they argue that the centers do not require them to pay myriad contributions of different types, as happens in public or private schools.⁵⁹

In search of security, women apparently have no hesitation about becoming the second or the third or even the fourth wife of a Salafi man. This seems to be a rational choice for them because finding a good man who understands their "position" is not an easy task. The prospect of returning to the countryside to seek a spouse with assistance from their families is equally complicated, because these believers have positioned themselves in a way that has altered their status, thus isolating them from their families. Consequently, they must seek a solution on their own. Polygamy is thus very common among the Salafis. In certain cases, the first wife of a Salafi man will look for a girl to become the second wife of her husband. The wives usually maintain a close relationship with each other. A dozen polygamous Salafis boasted to me that they had no problems maintaining more than one wife, and that, in fact, the arrangement brings them social and economic benefits. They claim that with two, three, or four wives they can produce many descendants and, at the same time, share economic burdens. A polygamous Salafi who works as garment peddler is proud of saying that the production of his garments has increased significantly thanks to his busy wives.⁶⁰

An enclave limits options on the basis of the contrast constructed between the saved inside and the damned outside. Since evil is considered to be inherent in the outside, the Salafis are compelled to cut themselves off from the miscellaneous temptations from this dangerous area. Radios, tape-recorders and televisions are consequently forbidden, as noted in the previous chapter. These things are thought to be able to lure Muslims away from the straight path of Islam. The wearing *jalabiyya* reinforces their separation from widespread temptations. They argue that by wearing *jalabiyya*, they are automatically repelled from those venues that might lure them to commit sinful acts. A Salafi man asserted, "When I wear *jalabiyya*, I could not possibly think to enter cinema. If I did so, everybody would look at me and laugh at me. The *jalabiyya* therefore functions to protect me from sinful acts."⁶¹ For women, living in an enclave entails considerable sacrifices, as the enclave requires them to limit interactions with people outside the community, and thus, be separated from the "open" world, a restriction symbolized by the wearing of the *niqab*. They are at least freed from the needs to buy trendy expensive blouses, skirts and make-up.

The closed pattern of social interaction and restriction of contact with people on the "outside" further limits the options of people living in an enclave. They are usually not involved in various social activities in the village where they live.

⁵⁹ Interviews with Yahya Abu Salih and Ja'far Abu Hafsah, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

⁶⁰ Interview with Marwan Abu Ishaq, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

⁶¹ Interview with Muhammad Ismail, Jakarta, October 2001.

According to villagers living near a Salafi enclave, they hardly ever see Salafis at village meetings or communal feasts, nor do Salafis contribute to communal social services. They even show some reluctance in simply greeting the villagers. This reluctance often stirs up tension with the villagers, who feel that the Salafis are inclined to be closed, arrogant, and distant. This tension sometimes breaks out into an open conflict, as once occurred in the veterans' complex in Yogyakarta.

Since Salafis consider women to be the weakest point in their defense of the boundaries segregating them from the world at large, the enclave imposes strict seclusion on them. On the basis of the doctrine of *ikhtilat* (which forbids mingling between men and women), women are secluded from the sphere of men and are only allowed to have contact with males in the presence of their husbands or of *mahram*, close male relatives whom they are not allowed to marry. If a visitor comes to the house and a woman's husband is not at home, she will inquire from behind the door whether the guest is male or female. If she learns that the guest is male, she will give no further response. Even when a woman's husband is present, it is not easy for a male guest to have contact with her. The guest will receive a cup of tea from behind a partition and perhaps glimpse a hand, but no more.

It is apparent that among the Salafis, the public sphere belongs only to men. Women are usually preoccupied with domestic affairs, such as taking care of children. It is thought best to give them tasks like teaching children to read the Qur'an on certain days in the *musalla*. If women help the productive activities of their husbands, by, say, sewing or needlework, they will do so from behind a partition. Public business is regarded as a male prerogative. Women's bodies are therefore under the control of men. At *ta'lim* or religious gatherings, women occupy a separate space behind the men. There is no doubt that the Salafis' enclave culture reinforces a hegemonic masculinity, a configuration of gender practice that legitimizes the patriarchy, guaranteeing the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.⁶²

AN ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM?

It is not clear whether this sort of enclave can be perceived as an alternative ideational system that affirms the nonseparation of the religious, legal, and political spheres. Can it be understood as an all-encompassing system that governs the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of believers' society? Is it sufficient to replace the secular nation-state system that Islamists all over the world claim has served the interests of the dominant world powers, rather than the ideological, political, or economic interests of Muslims? These are the questions to be tackled in the rest of this chapter.

In contrast to the sort of Islamism that explicitly conceives of Islam as a religion that provides the foundation for a political ideology, an economic system, and a social order, the Salafi enclave does not have a particular political agenda. Nor does it have a specific program of action. What it pursues is apparently mere rhetoric. In the shadow of diverse and complex regulations governing the contemporary global world, for instance, it implements simplicity; in the face of the temptation of modern

⁶² See Murray Knuttila, "Lean and Mean: Hegemonic Masculinity as Fundamentalism," in *Contesting Fundamentalisms*, ed. Carol Schick et al. (Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2004), pp. 91-104.

luxuries advertised by capitalistic purveyors, it offers sobriety; in the face of the triumph of secular political powers, it relies on traditional authority; and within the domination of the world's pluralism, it maintains exclusiveness.

What is clear is that the enclave has emerged as a domain in which a resistance identity is created; this group identity opposes state control and the domination of the state business and the corporate sector imposed by the currents of modernization and globalization. In the face of the global hegemonic world order, this resistance is not organized openly but through discourses, symbols, and everyday practices. The life in the enclave reflects "everyday forms" of resistance against disempowerment, which, according to James C. Scott, are critical to, and perhaps the most significant form of, class struggle. He sees this form of resistance as both intentional and nonintentional, individual and coordinated, and in fact anything members or subordinate groups do when they rely on themselves:

When the poor symbolically undermine the self-awarded status of the rich by inventing nicknames, by malicious gossip, by boycotting their feasts, by blaming their greed and stinginess for the current state of affairs, they are simultaneously asserting their own claim to status. Even when, as frequently happens, a poor family holds a feast they can ill afford. It is a small but significant sign of their determination not to accept the cultural marginalization their scant means imply.⁶³

The enclave emerges as the response of a marginalized people whose social mobility is blocked by the power of the global world that has effectively colonized every aspect of societal life. It facilitates an attempt to regain control over the world and reclaim power. But this attempt is made by limiting the area of control. A firm wall of virtue is created to delimit the area of control. Within its borders, the members of an enclave build a new life. They believe that the world outside their barricade is susceptible to material and social temptations. Hence, the enclave can be expected to be quite rigid in defense of its boundaries. As Castells argues, "when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community."⁶⁴

By resisting the existing order from within communal boundaries it creates by and for itself, the enclave transforms the position of the individual members from local into global subjects, or from local spectators into global actors. In this respect, subjects are no longer merely individuals but now become collective social actors; through this transformation, individuals establish a holistic meaning in their experience. They are seemingly wrestling for control not over "reins of power" but over the process of determining meaning. This is the tendency that Castells calls "the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded."⁶⁵

The enclave might be better conceived as a form of struggle for—rather than as a rejection of—modernity. In Paul Lubeck's terms, it is an attempt to pursue an

⁶³ J. C. Scott, *Weapon of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 240.

⁶⁴ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban, Social Movements* (Berkeley, CA: University California Press, 1983), p. 331.

⁶⁵ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, p. 9.

alternative route to modernity.⁶⁶ That is why it accepts certain aspects of modernity. Therefore it is not surprising to come across persons living in an enclave who use mobile phones, motorcycles, and cars. They believe that these vehicles are useful tools for supporting activities committed to the glory of the enclave. Similarly, a computer is not considered a taboo, for it is a tool that can help them conduct their resistance, since it is the primary means of publishing pamphlets, bulletins, and magazines containing salvation messages generated from within the enclave.

While it may appear ambivalent in these matters, the enclave explicitly rejects the domination of the West. Its criticism is particularly addressed to the secular system—political, economic, social, or cultural—since adherents view this system as an imposition of the West. They claim that this system has generated a society that is brutal, sadistic, and licentious. To the members of the enclave, the way to escape this disaster is the *shari`a* and nothing but the *shari`a*, whose implementation will bring stability, morality, and prosperity. The *shari`a* is thus seen as an alternative and a solution to the crisis and is trusted as a blueprint for creating a fair and prosperous society.

The repudiation of the West constitutes a common thread running through various Islamist movements that have emerged in the contemporary Muslim world. According to Bobby Sayyid, this problem is rooted in the fact that the failures of ruling regimes in the Muslim world have so often resulted from their attempts to imitate Western models. When the regimes came to power, they swept away indigenous traditions by identifying them with ignorance, backwardness, and poverty, and they favored Western innovations, which they identified with progress and prosperity.⁶⁷ When the modernization they initiated stumbled and failed to achieve the promised economic development, society's alienation and dependency deepened and the West became the target of anger, particularly from the groups that had been previously excluded or were promised benefits they never received.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the incursions of Western hegemony seem too strong to be blocked. Ruling regimes that positioned themselves as the dedicated collaborators of the West are still in place. When they are replaced, their successors usually come from their own camp because the aspirations of potential challengers have been suffocated under the hegemony of the state. The system of capitalist economics introduced by the collaborators has continued its domination, pushing the remaining traditional economic actors aside. The Western-style consumerism implanted by this capitalist economic system has rapidly expanded, clearly altering the lifestyles of the people who are in a position to enjoy the benefits of development. The frustration arising from an inability to adjust to all these developments provides fertile ground for the growth of the enclave, which functions as a vehicle for legitimizing the frustration of deprived people.

In this context, jihad emerges as the concept whose symbols and discourses can be used to express anger. Its use reflects the impotence of deprived citizens in the

⁶⁶ Paul M. Lubeck, "The Islamic Revival, Antinomies of Islamic Movements under Globalization," in *Global Social Movements*, ed. Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 150-51.

⁶⁷ Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 1997), p. 158.

⁶⁸ Bryan S. Turner, "Politics and Culture in Islamic Globalism," in *Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, vol. IV, *Islam and Social Movements*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 84-102.

face of uncertainty arising from modernization and globalization sponsored by the ruling regimes backed up by the war machines imported from the West. As Benjamin Barber puts it, jihad in its most elemental form is a kind of animal fear propelled by anxiety in the face of uncertainty and relieved by self-sacrificing zealotry—an escape from history. Using the term “McWorld” as a metaphor for the globalizing world that he equates with the history of individualization, acquisitiveness, secularization, aggressiveness, atomization, and immorality, Barber writes:

Jihad tends the soul that McWorld abjures and strives for moral well-being that McWorld, busy with the consumer choices it mistakes for freedom, disdains. Jihad thus goes to war with McWorld and, because each worries the other will obstruct and ultimately thwart the realization of its ends, the war between them becomes a holy war. The lines here are drawn not in sand but in stone.⁶⁹

These people consider jihad an appropriate choice since they believe that McWorld flaunts its victories and shows no awareness of their frustration. By glorifying the symbols of jihad, they are in fact trying to resist their own impotence and frustration, and thereby establish their identity and claim dignity. The zeal of purity and martyrdom fuels and completes their struggle.

For these people, the desire to resist McWorld will continue to burn bright as long as their frustration is not addressed or ameliorated. This resistance will oscillate between two poles: enclave and jihad. The former is implicit, and the latter is explicit. Under certain favorable political situations, implicit resistance in the form of an enclave can resort to explicit resistance in the form of jihad. In contrast to the enclave, jihad can transform marginality into centrality and defeat into patriotism. But it should be noted that these strategies all remain predominantly rhetorical. Global hegemonic war machines are certainly strong enough to withstand the swords drawn in jihad and embellished with the slogan of “*La ilaha illa Allah*.”

⁶⁹ Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York, NY: Times Books, 1995), p. 215.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE DRAMA OF JIHAD IN THE MOLUCCAS

The appearance of thousands of Laskar Jihad fighters in Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta on April 6, 2000 surprised the majority of Indonesians. Battalions of *jalabiyya*-wearing young men with swords on proud display had come to the capital to proclaim their determination to wage jihad in the Spice Islands of the Moluccas. More surprising was that these recruits were bearded youths who had hitherto seemed closed off from and immune to whatever happened outside their exclusive domains of life in their enclave. While some people welcomed these fighters with enthusiasm, sharing their resolve to combat the "enemies of Islam," most were shocked and worried that it was a sign of the proliferation of religious radicalism that would seed hostility among different religious communities.

Laskar Jihad fighters gathered in the heat to stage a spectacular collective action. At that time, they presented themselves majestically: a sea of swarming people clad in white, absorbed in chants of "*Allah Akbar*." Echoes of their chants reverberated throughout the stadium. Sunlight flashed from their swords like strobe lights. In the background, banners and posters fluttered, emblazoned with the slogans "*Wage jihad fi sabil Allah*" (holy war for the cause of God) and "Defend Muslims in the Moluccas." At the height of his public display, commander-in-chief Ja`far Umar Thalib mounted the podium and delivered a speech in which he decried the "disaster" afflicting Moluccan Muslims, confronted as they were by a genocidal threat. He proclaimed the year 2000 to be the year of jihad and openly declared his determination to mobilize his fighters.

From the Senayan Stadium, Laskar Jihad fighters marched to the parliament building to meet with the parliamentary spokesman and his deputies. Still unsatisfied, they staged a demonstration in front of the presidential palace and called on the government to intervene in the Moluccas and restore social order. Accompanied by leaders of the Moluccan Muslims, including Rustam Kastor, Ali Fauzy, and Abu Bakar Wahid al-Banjari, three representatives of Laskar Jihad—Thalib, Ayip Syafruddin, and Ma`ruf Bahrun—met President Abdurrahman Wahid. Face to face with Wahid, they blatantly criticized him for his "indifference" to the fate of Muslims in the Moluccas and his tendency to side with Christians. They even blamed Wahid for having supported the revival of communism. The meeting came to an abrupt end after Wahid had them thrown out of his office.¹

Subsequently, Laskar Jihad recruits marched to Kampung Munjul-Tanah Sareal, Bogor, to the south of Jakarta, to undergo paramilitary training through a program they had named "National United Training" (*Latihan Gabungan Nasional*). This

¹ This event was reported by various mass media. See "Enam Wakil Laskar Jihad Bertemu Presiden," *Kompas*, April 7, 2000; and "Menunggu Delapan Mata Mau Semeja di Jakarta," *Gamma*, April 12, 2000, pp. 24-26.

term is usually used by the Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) to refer to a large-scale military training programs. They set up their base on a seven-hectare plot belonging to al-Irsyad, around which banners reading "Laskar Jihad Fighters Training for Combat" were scattered. Some three thousand participants committed themselves to physical fitness exercises and to learning commando tactics, survival techniques, and self-defense. As mentioned earlier, they were trained by former members of university student regiments and veterans of the Afghan, Moro, and Kashmir Wars. A number of witnesses have testified that this training even involved some military personnel.²

Although the police claimed to have barricaded the area, they took no significant action to break up the training. Drawing his own conclusion, Wahid, through the then Minister of Religious Affairs, Mochammad Tolchah Hasan, eventually issued an unequivocal order to the police to take any action necessary to prevent Laskar Jihad from carrying out its self-proclaimed mission. He even took the unprecedented step of stating that he would prevent Laskar Jihad from entering any part of the Moluccan islands. Under police pressure, Laskar Jihad called the training off on the tenth day, one week earlier than scheduled. Before heading for the organization's headquarters in Yogyakarta, members handed in nearly five hundred weapons to the police. Despite the early break up of these training exercises, Thalib insisted he would go ahead with plans to deploy ten thousand combatants in the Moluccas, whatever the risks, and he sent his fighters home with a single standing order burning in their minds.³

Assiduous in his preparations, Thalib decided to send an investigation team on a mission to survey and map the areas of conflict, indicating the current locations of Muslims in the islands and preparing for the arrival of Laskar Jihad fighters. This team eventually arrived in Ambon. At Port Slamet Ryadi, one member of the mission recounted, they were enthusiastically welcomed by military men, who greeted them with the words, "Welcome to the jihad battlefield," and they were immediately provided with a number of standard military weapons including AK47s and SS14s.⁴ The success of this mission apparently convinced Laskar Jihad that its campaign to rescue Muslims in the Moluccas should push ahead.

On April 26, 2000, 111 Laskar Jihad recruits left Port Tanjung Perak in Surabaya. Four days later they arrived in Ambon. Their arrival was followed by the appearance of hundreds more volunteers who left from both Port Tanjung Perak in Surabaya and Port Tanjung Priok in Jakarta. In May, four ships transported around eight hundred fighters into the Moluccas. After the arrival of almost a thousand fighters during April and May, thousands more made their way to Ambon during the following months. In July, Laskar Jihad had recorded almost three thousand combatants stationed in a dozen command posts on the island of Ambon. This number remained fairly constant, with new volunteers coming to the islands to replace those returning home. The total number of Laskar Jihad fighters deployed to the islands reached approximately seven thousand.⁵

² Interview with a dozen Laskar Jihad lieutenants in December 2000. See also "Peta Baru Siasat Islam," *Gamma*, April 19, 2000, pp. 28-29; Damien Kingsbury, *The Politics of Indonesia*, third ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 220.

³ Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁴ Interview with a member of the team, Jakarta, December 2000.

⁵ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Solo, January 2003.

THE THEATRICAL DIMENSION OF THE MISSION

As I shall demonstrate, Laskar Jihad's mission in the Moluccas can be conceptualized as a drama, because this apparently frenzied action was motivated not so much by the hope for a resounding victory as by an ambition to fabricate a heroic image. This process began with the spectacular gathering at the Senayan Stadium, a strategic and prestigious site close to the political and business centers of Jakarta. Through the media, millions of Indonesians watched participants shout, cry, and laugh together, displaying their determination and capacity to defend the Moluccan Muslims from the attacks of Christian enemies. There was near-hysteria. They wished to hypnotize the public by using the symbols of jihad. In so doing, they conveyed the impression that they were the group most committed to defending the Muslim *umma*.

This gathering was the moment when the Salafis claimed what they considered to be their rightful place in the political arena of Indonesia. Capitalizing on the rapid spread of their influence, the Salafis demanded greater acceptance within the political sphere. This demand was not easily realized because of their lack of support among Indonesian Muslims, however, and they remained a marginal organization. It is apparent that the call for jihad in the Moluccas was part of the politics of recognition pursued by Indonesian Salafis, an attempt to enhance their identity and thereby negotiate a place for themselves on the map of Indonesian Islam.



Figure XII: Laskar Jihad fighters in the *tabligh akbar* in Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta on April 6, 2000. (Courtesy of *Tempo*, May 20, 2001)

Through the staging of such theatrical scenes, Laskar Jihad recruits undeniably emerged and impressed the public as militant youths willing to martyr themselves for the cause of God. Wearing the distinctive uniform of the Salafis (white *jalabiyya* and turban), complete with arms on proud display, they portrayed themselves as the most heroic jihad combatants, aching to venture to the frontlines. They acted as if they were regular soldiers who had been ordered to secure their nation and religion.

No doubt behind this appearance lay an ambition to demonstrate, in the face of powerful opponents, a hitherto marginalized power and to challenge the hegemonic global order.

Laskar Jihad fighters, cast as heroes or villains destined for some grand adventure, according to differing scenarios, acted in a plot that could end either happily or tragically. This plot might have been written beforehand, or it might have been improvised, or it might have been crystallized only after the drama was underway. Any of these possibilities is of little significance, however, if the players on stage lack an audience to cheer for the protagonists and applaud their struggle against the hegemonic global order. The performance was, in fact, a message conveyed through symbols, signs, and signals, all tools typically employed by individuals and groups seeking to achieve some goal that involves public recognition. Victor Turner argues that because social drama takes place in a conflict situation, it functions mainly as an arena where loyalty and obligation are stressed as much as interest, and the course of events may turn out to have a tragic quality.⁶

The main actor in this drama was no doubt Ja'far Umar Thalib, himself a sign among signs. But it was the drama of jihad that created him, raised him from the ranks of a modest Salafi *ustadh* to an icon of jihad, for without this drama the image of the hero could never have taken form. Nevertheless, in order to leave a lasting impression, he needed to mobilize, and, more importantly, to be seen mobilizing the forces that would lift him onto the political stage. Mobilizing men for jihad was, thus, his primary task. The flow of fighters from various provinces in Indonesia, who came to proclaim their support for this action, both strengthened his position as the icon of jihad and facilitated the process by which he could claim central leadership among Indonesian Muslims.



Figure XIII: Laskar Jihad fighters in front of MPR headquarters in Senayan, Jakarta. (Courtesy of *Tempo*, May 20, 2001)

⁶ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 33-39.

The Moluccan province constituted the primary stage on which Laskar Jihad recruits acted out their drama. This stage is figuratively located in the huge theatre building called the Republic of Indonesia, where the New Order had successfully managed political power by expertly using symbols and state rituals for more than thirty-two years. As described by Clifford Geertz, in the case of nineteenth-century Bali, in a theatre state, political symbology—ranging from myth, insignia, and etiquette to palaces, titles, and ceremonies—is the instrument of purposes concealed behind it. Its relations to the real business of politics are therefore all extrinsic. But the isomorphic aspects of “practical” instrumental politics and expressive actions cannot be isolated from the exercise of power itself.⁷



Figure XIV: The united paramilitary training in Bogor, West Java, involving some military personnel.
(Courtesy of *Tempo*, May 20, 2001).

As players in a drama, Laskar Jihad volunteers acted intentionally to capture public notice. They enjoyed the coverage in the media, including television, radio, newspapers, bulletins, and magazines, although their Salafi doctrine should have prevented them from doing so. They warmly welcomed reporters from the media who used the event (and at times sensationalized it) to sell their publications. For Laskar Jihad fighters, this dramatic enactment thus enabled them to gain control over the means of symbolic production. As a drama, it was rife with scenes of victory and loss. Happiness and sadness were blurred into scenes of jihad, stirring the emotions of the audience. Yet the plot remained dependent on the socio-political setting that constituted its background. Changes to this setting would determine the plot's sustainability.

⁷ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 122-23.

THE ROAD TO THE MOLUCCAS

It is hard to envisage that this kind of drama could be enacted in a sovereign state without facing a significant challenge, if not outright repression, from the agents of the state. But the jihad actions of Laskar Jihad demonstrated that this ordinary logic had little binding force in Indonesia. In fact, Laskar Jihad had no trouble dispatching thousands of its fighters into the fray. One very interesting fact is that a dozen Laskar Jihad fighters left for their destination on the same ships carrying military personnel of the Kodam Siliwangi and the Kodam Brawijaya from West and East Java, respectively. These volunteers claimed not only to have chatted and joked with the military personnel during the voyage, but also to have enjoyed a warm welcome from the military officers of the Kodam Pattimura who arrived to pick up their military colleagues disembarking at Port Slamet Ryadi.⁸

It seems the success of Laskar Jihad's mobilization was determined by the backing of the military, the party responsible for "securing" Indonesian territory. Referring to the dispatch of his fighters, Thalib himself acknowledged that he had held a series of discussions with some members of the military elite, thus contradicting his previous denial that he had gained support from them. In an interview in April 2000, he even justified the fact that someone was arranging a meeting between him and Widodo Adi Sucipto, the then Commander-in-Chief of TNI.⁹ Several newspapers covered the press release dispatched by him on May 2, 2000, in which he boasted that he had discussed sending his fighters to the Moluccas with the Army Commander, Tyasno Soedarto, in the presence of the Commander of the Kodam Diponegoro, Bibit Waloyo, the Governor of Central Java, Mardiyanto, as well as the TNI Territorial Head of Staff, Agus Widjojo.¹⁰

The military's implicit support of Laskar Jihad's mission was further strengthened by TNI's decision that it would not attempt to stanch the influx of Laskar Jihad fighters into the Moluccas. Max Tamaela, the Commander of the Kodam Pattimura, did nothing to impede Pelni (National Shipping Company) ships that carried Laskar Jihad fighters from dropping anchor at Ambon. It would not have been difficult for him to order his troops to blockade the port and send Laskar Jihad's fighters back to Java if he had the backing of at least some members of the military elite, but no superior officers appear to have given this command. The linkage between certain people in the military elite and Laskar Jihad was mentioned unequivocally by George Aditjondro, and, in his opinion, this was the decisive factor of the success of the group's operations in the islands. He stated that a number of officers were involved, including, among others, Wiranto, Djaja Suparman, Suaidi Marasabessy, and Sudi Silalahi, in collaboration with many serving and retired military officers in the Moluccas, such as Nano Sutarno, Rustam Kastor, Rusdi Hasanussy, and M. Yusuf Ely.¹¹ It should be noted, however, that Aditjondro did not

⁸ Interview with a number of Laskar Jihad veterans, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

⁹ "Target Kami Menjatuhkan Gus Dur," interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Panji Masyarakat* 1,4 (April 26, 2000).

¹⁰ Mohammad Shoelhi, *Laskar Jihad: Kambing Hitam Konflik Maluku* (Jakarta: Puzam, 2002), p. 27.

¹¹ George Junus Aditjondro, "Guns, Pamphlets, and Handie-Talkies: How the Military Exploited Local Ethno-Religious Tensions in Maluku to Preserve their Political and Economic Privileges," in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), pp. 115-17.

provide fully sufficient evidence for this speculation. In addition, he seems to have overlooked the internal strength of the Salafis in mobilizing thousands of volunteers, which, as we have seen, was crucial for the establishment of Laskar Jihad.

The inclination of Moluccan Muslims to welcome the Laskar Jihad fighters was crucial. Herein lies the significance of the support from various elements among the Moluccan Muslims. The process of rapprochement with them was facilitated by several Muslim politicians, including speakers in the *tabligh akbar sejuta ummat* (mass religious gathering said to include a million Muslims) such as Hamzah Haz, Ahmad Sumargono, Eggy Sujana, Husein Umar, and Amien Rais. The most tangible support came from the first four, who praised Laskar Jihad's actions and defended it from criticism on various occasions. Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sujana were said to have repeatedly visited Laskar Jihad's headquarters and to have had close contacts with Thalib and Syafruddin.¹² In my interview with him, Syafruddin even claimed to have had a special channel of communications open to Sumargono.¹³ Significant support was also given to Laskar Jihad by Husein Umar, the secretary of DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation), the organization that set up the Committee for Overcoming Crises (Komite Penanggulangan Krisis, Kompak), the first humanitarian group to operate in the Moluccas, using support from two international philanthropic organizations, the London-based Muslim Aid and Saudi Arabia-based Haramayn Foundation.¹⁴

Various elements among the Moluccan Muslims played a crucial role in facilitating the arrival of Laskar Jihad's fighters. The main support was provided by people attached to the al-Fatah Mosque, which had long been the activity center for various Islamic organizations in the Moluccas and which, during the conflict, served as a crisis center called The Task Force for Coping with "Bloody Idul Fitri" (Satgas Penanggulangan Idul "Fitri Berdarah"). A building near this mosque, Gedung Al-Atsari, still serves as the headquarters of the provincial branch offices of DDII, Muhammadiyah, and MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the Council of Indonesian *Ulama*). As a matter of fact, at least fourteen officials of DDII, MUI, Muhammadiyah, the Al-Fatah Mosque Foundation, and other organizations signed a letter supporting the arrival of Laskar Jihad's fighters. They included Rustam Kastor, Ali Fauzy, H. R. R. Hassanussi, Malik Selang, Hamdani Laturuasif, Ridwan Hasan, Paiang, A. Ely, Husein Toisuta, Abdul Wahab L., Husein Latael, Muhammad Djosan Bugis, Abd R. Hayoto, and Hasan Pelu.¹⁵

Most of these leaders had participated as activists, if not chairmen, in the provincial branches of Islamic parties, such as PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party), PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party), PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Moon Party), and PK (Partai Keadilan, Justice Party).¹⁶ In the June 1999 general elections, these parties failed to gain a significant number of seats in the provincial parliament of the Moluccas. The winner

¹² Interview with Abu Zaki Ery Ziyad, Yogyakarta, October 2001.

¹³ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Solo, December 2002.

¹⁴ Interview with Husein Umar, Jakarta, June 2003. See also Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, *Laporan Kegiatan Kompak, Komite Penanggulangan Krisis 1998-1999* (Jakarta: DDII, 1999), p. 47.

¹⁵ See "Surat Dukungan," in *Bundel Maluku Hari Ini*, March-July 2000 (Yogyakarta and Ambon: Tim Medis Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, 2000).

¹⁶ Interview with Isa Raharusun, Ambon, April 2003.

was the Christian-dominated PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle). Having been shocked by this result, the losers claimed that the religious and ethnic conflict initiated by the Christians had contributed a great deal to their defeat. They uttered accusations alleging that the forced migration of Muslims seeking refuge in the outer islands of the Moluccas gave the Christians a political advantage. The Synod Chairman of the Moluccan Protestant Church, L. W. J. Hendriks, did not deny that the Christian politicians in PDI-P had gained an advantage in the wake of the conflict, but strongly rejected the idea that Christians had plotted to win the general elections by sparking the conflict.¹⁷

The most important figure among the Muslims who spoke out at this time was no doubt Rustam Kastor, a retired colonel who helped spread the rumors about RMS (Republik Maluku Selatan, Republic of the South Moluccas) among Moluccan Muslims and actively published articles analyzing the conflict as a conspiracy in *Ambon Ekspres*, a newspaper that seemed to align itself with Muslims by portraying them as the group that must defend itself. This newspaper stood on the opposite side of the divide from *Siwalima* and *Suara Maluku*, two local dailies that painted a favorable picture of the Christian side. In his effort to spread these rumors to a national audience, Rustam Kastor later published a book entitled *Fakta, Data dan Analisa, Konspirasi Politik RMS dan Kristen Menghancurkan Ummat Islam di Ambon-Maluku* (Facts, Data, and Analysis of an RMS-Christian Conspiracy to Destroy Muslims in Ambon, the Moluccas).¹⁸

In terms of operations, Laskar Jihad gained support from two newly established, local, hard-line Muslim groups, the Front of the Defenders of Islam in the Moluccas (Front Pembela Islam Maluku, FPIM), not to be confused with the Muhammad Rizieq Syihab-led Front of the Defenders of Islam (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), and the Task-Force for Enjoining Good and Eliminating Evil (Satuan Tugas Amar Ma'ruf Nahy Munkar). These two groups provided Laskar Jihad access to detailed information they had concerning the battlefield and key locations of the groups involved. It should be noted that both these organizations had nurtured close ties with local jihad units and Muslim militia groups scattered all over Ambon.

The Front Pembela Islam Maluku was set up at the beginning of 2000 by M. Husain Toisuta, an influential local leader from Ahuru, and M. Husni Putuhena, a former teacher at the Pesantren Persis, Bangil, who is employed as a civil servant in the Department of Religious Affairs in Ambon.¹⁹ Under their leadership, this organization emerged as one of the most vocal groups extolling the call to jihad. They distributed pamphlets and booklets to different elements among Moluccan Muslims to explain the chronology of the Moluccan conflict more clearly, reinforcing the image of the conflict as a systematic effort by Christians to kill or expel Muslims from the islands. They sought to convince Moluccan Muslims that "the only way to confront this challenge is to wage *jihad fi sabil Allah*."²⁰

The Satuan Tugas Amar Ma'ruf Nahyi Munkar emerged on the scene slightly later. This group was established and led by Mohammad Attamimy, a young man of

¹⁷ Interview with L. W. J. Hendriks, Ambon, April 2003.

¹⁸ Rustam Kastor, *Fakta, Data dan Analisa, Konspirasi Politik RMS dan Kristen Menghancurkan Umat Islam di Ambon dan Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2001).

¹⁹ Interview with M. Husni Putuhena, Ambon, April 2003.

²⁰ M. Husni Putuhena, *Kerusuhan di Maluku: Konspirasi RMS dan Gereja Kristen untuk Rencana Gospel-Gold-Glory Menyongsong Abad Oikumene* (Ambon: FPIM, 2000).

Hadrami descent who had served as a lecturer at the State College of Islamic Studies (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, STAIN) of Ambon and has recently been appointed its director. The presence of this institution in the Moluccas has long been a bone of contention for the Christian Ambonese, who have denounced it as a dangerous source for the dissemination of anti-Christian sentiments. The organization itself evolved from the Coordinating Committee of Security Fields (Badan Koordinasi Keamanan Lapangan), which belonged to the Coordinating Board of Moluccan Muslims (Badan Koordinasi Umat Islam Maluku) led by Abdullah Tuasikal.²¹

ON THE JIHAD BATTLEFIELD

Muslims in the Moluccas enthusiastically welcomed Laskar Jihad fighters as if they were heroes predestined to sacrifice their lives in the defense of Islam in the islands. Along the roads from Port Slamet Ryadi to the al-Fatah Mosque, they stood side-by-side crying "Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, Laskar Jihad is coming." Some embraced and kissed these young fighters. In front of the al-Fatah Mosque, official welcoming ceremonies were organized, at which the fighters were initiated as true jihad combatants. These volunteers subsequently marched to Kebun Cengkeh, the area around the State College for Islamic Studies of Ambon, where several houses had been provided for their accommodation. In this area, they set up a base that functioned as their headquarters and where they underwent military training, including instruction in the handling of heavy weapons such as the MK-III and artillery mortars, under the tutelage of a number of military personnel and policemen.²² Lukman Ba'abduh served as Thalib's deputy responsible for coordinating the activities there. The division of labor among Laskar Jihad fighters was clearly defined. Some remained there, and others were sent to Wakal, Laha, Kota Jawa and Air Salobar.

Most of the Laskar Jihad fighters were unskilled combatants. They went to the Moluccas with limited experience, with their capacities as warriors untested. Except a small number of fighters (no more than one hundred) grouped into the Special Force (Pasukan Khusus), they were not intended to become combatants in the thick of the battles. As stated by Thalib himself, they were "basically religious preachers, armed with religious knowledge to preach to the locals." Of the more than one hundred members I interviewed, only two fighters claimed to have engaged in real battles. Because of their limited capacities, most of the Salafi fighters were, at best, asked to watch for signs of imminent threats at jihad posts engraved with the familiar crossed sabers.

Nevertheless, the arrival of these inexperienced fighters undeniably fueled the spirit of the Moluccan Muslims and inspired them to take up swords and join the fray. This is because their arrival added a nuance to the local Muslim struggle, now more clearly imbued with the spirit of jihad. A local leader, Ali Fauzy, judged that the presence of Laskar Jihad powerfully influenced the mental attitude of Moluccan Muslims:

²¹ Interview with Muhammad Attamimy, Ambon, April 2003.

²² Interview with Mahmud Hasan, an eyewitness living near the area, Ambon, April 2003.

The presence of Laskar Jihad seems to have awakened our consciousness to the dignity of jihad so that thousands of people, young and old, men and women, enthusiastically took part in a resistance to belligerent infidels. They were ashamed to keep silent while their Muslim brothers who had come from far away put their lives at risk by traveling to Ambon.²³

The commander-in-chief, Thalib, played his role perfectly as the protagonist of the drama. He mesmerized Moluccan Muslims, who listened intently to his speeches and sermons delivered on various occasions. Partly because of these speeches, he became much admired. People in every corner of Ambon spoke about him and praised his heroism. Recordings of his words were reproduced and continuously replayed on radio cassettes. The national media enthusiastically covered his activities, publishing stories with headlines such as "Commander of the Laskar Jihad, Ja'far Umar Thalib, Leads Jihad in Ambon." His influence was thus reinforced, and he was acknowledged nationally as a hero. On such occasions, he usually imparted fresh life to the jihad spirit of his own volunteers, as well as that of local Muslims, by trumpeting the rhetoric of jihad. In one of his sermons, entitled "Uniting Muslim Lines" (*Menyatukan Barisan Kaum Muslim*), delivered at the gathering in front of al-Fatah Mosque just a few days after the Laskar Jihad's first volunteers disembarked in Ambon, Thalib said:

We are now being attacked by Christian enemies who desire to remove us from the face of the earth. Therefore, we have to answer this challenge with *jihad fi sabil Allah*. Don't think of any other alternatives. We do not want to be colonized. If we wage a war against them, we will retain our dignity. That is the only choice. This is not taking place only in the Moluccas, but also in Poso, Luwu and Gorontalo. They will continue to wage a crusade against us. Muslims in Java and other islands are preparing themselves to wage a war against belligerent unbelievers and their collaborators alike. I am sure that the unbelievers will be defeated by Muslim holy fighters resisting them under the slogan *Allah Akbar*. They rise to wage a *jihad fi sabil Allah*, under one command, the command of God, to defeat rebellious warmongering unbelievers.²⁴

In his record of the many events that were part of the Moluccan conflict, Kastor praised this sermon by Thalib as having contributed a great deal to the spirit of revenge among Moluccan Muslims, inspiring them to take up arms:

They appeared in the streets to applaud their heroes locked in combat on the battlefields. They bestowed blessing on and chanted *Allah Akbar* to the victims brought back to the rear. Everybody seemed enthusiastic about engaging in this war. This "crazy" mass were apparently inspired to action by the sermon of Ja'far Umar Thalib, the Commander-in-Chief of the Laskar Jihad, in a mosque in Ambon, where he declared that every martyr who joined in the battles to defend either God's religion or country would receive from Almighty Allah a pass to

²³ Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, April 2003.

²⁴ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Menyatukan Barisan Kaum Muslim," *Cassette Record* (Yogyakarta: DPP FKAWJ, 2000).

enter the Gates of Heaven and seven other passes for his closest family members.²⁵

In retrospect, there is no denying that after the coming of the Laskar Jihad fighters to Ambon, the aggressiveness of the Muslim side intensified significantly. In mid-May 2000, Muslim forces attacked and took over Ahuru. In the same month, they attacked Galala and the police Mobil Brigade (Brigade Mobil, Brimob) headquarters in Tantui. Simultaneously, they seized Efrata Church and Otto Kwick Hospital, located in the same area. One particularly efficacious result of the attack on the Brimob headquarters was that Muslims obtained various kinds of weaponry, including Colt .28 pistols, Jungle Carbines, SKS rifles, MK-IIIIs, LMGs, and even Mortar-5s. This new weaponry bolstered the Muslims' strike capability. Previously, they had collected standard weapons, like AK47s, M-16s, and pre-assembled bombs containing TNT, through personal channels.²⁶ Subsequently, they attacked and seized the Christian University of the Moluccas at Talake and the State University of Pattimura at Poka. The increase in Muslim attacks on Christian targets also occurred in the North Moluccas. Under the leadership of Abu Bakar Wahid al-Banjari, Muslim militias in the islands sought and won retaliation for the events of December 1999, when Christian militias had killed more than five hundred Muslims in Galela and Tobelo. Because of the upsurge in the aggressiveness of the Muslim forces during these months, almost forty Christian villages were ruined, while only one Muslim village—Iha, on Saparua—was lost.²⁷

The Moluccan Muslims believed that the hour had come to take revenge against Christians, who had previously had the upper hand. They were ready to defeat the core Christian forces mobilized by Protestant churches. At Maranatha, the biggest church in Ambon, a communications office known as Bankom (Bantuan Komunikasi, Communications Assistance) was established during the conflict. This office served as the center of the radio communications network interlinking every Christian church throughout the Moluccas, as well as logistical units of Christians.²⁸ People in the churches worked together with several Christian Ambonese militia groups, including those led by Agus Wattimena and Bertu Loupatty, themselves devout church activists. Both did indeed appear to be strong opponents, able to coordinate small groups of a hundred to two hundred volunteers in Ambon, as well as other groups in the rest of the islands. Since April 1998, Wattimena had molded his members into the Christ Militia Force (Laskar Kristus, LK), while Loupatty organized his members into the Coker (Cowok-cowok Kristen/Cowok-Cowok Keren, meaning "Christian boys" or "handsome boys").²⁹ Both groups often trumpeted slogans such as "Saya Cinta Yesus" (I love Jesus), "Yesus Raya" (Jesus is

²⁵ Rustam Kastor, *Badai Pembalasan Laskar Mujahidin Ambon dan Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2000), pp. 17-18.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 34-67.

²⁷ Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, April 2003.

²⁸ Thanks to Gerry van Klinken for this information and for allowing me to read his manuscript, *Small Town Wars*, forthcoming. See also Tjitske Lingsma, "Als Het Fout Gaat, Wordt Het Genocide," *Vrij Nederland*, May 27, 2000, pp. 20-21.

²⁹ Badrus Sholeh, "Ethno-Religious Conflict and Reconciliation: Dynamics of Muslim and Christian Relationships in Ambon" (MA Thesis, Australian National University, 2003), p. 35; see also Wens Manggut, "Dari Coker Sampai Laskar Kristus," *Tempo*, May 19, 2002, p. 32.

Victorious), "Darah Yesus" (Blood of Jesus) and "Martir Kristus" (Martyr of Christ), and sang the Christian hymn "Maju Laskar Kristen" (Onward Christian Soldiers).³⁰ It is said that they enjoyed support not only from Christian Ambonese top military officers, such as Leo Lopulisa, Ade Pecaulima, Franky Kaihatu, Pieter Wattimena, George Toisuta and Leo Wattimena, but also from Budiono, an active colonel who acted as their combat adviser.³¹

The Salafi newcomers influenced not only their coreligionists. The arrival of the Laskar Jihad fighters stimulated other elements among Christian Moluccans to organize themselves. Alex Manuputti, for instance, established the Front Kedaulatan Maluku (Moluccan Sovereignty Front, FKM) on July 15, 2000 in Kudamati, Ambon, but this organization was not made public until December 18 of that year.³² Since this organization had originally been established in 1950 with the aim of restoring the sovereignty of the Moluccan people under the Republic of the South Moluccas, its reappearance certainly legitimized some Laskar Jihad claims about the linkage between Christian Moluccans and RMS.

It should be noted that the key Muslim successes in attacks against Christian targets during these months were won by local Muslim forces that had gotten their act together and succeeded in organizing and arming themselves. The Special Force of Laskar Jihad certainly involved themselves in the battles. They were especially charged with operating Mortar-5s after they had received training from military personnel. Under this expert instruction, they even succeeded in modifying Mortar-5s by attaching pre-assembled bombs. Their involvement in battles was easily recognizable, since they never failed to display their distinctive identifying costume. They wore *jalabiyya* and turban or T-shirts decorated with their organization's logo and the boldfaced words "Laskar Jihad Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah." Thalib acknowledged the involvement of his group in a series of Muslim attacks on Christian villages. As the commander-in-chief, he himself claimed to have led several of the attacks. His chief concern was maintaining the spirit and resolve of his fighters.³³ In the course of their engagements, some forty combatants perished.

Because of its conspicuous involvement, Laskar Jihad came to be associated in the public perceptions with the number of other Muslim paramilitary forces from outside the region taking part in the battles against Christians in the Moluccas. One was the Special Force (Laskar Khos) of Laskar Mujahidin. In their operations, fighters belonging to this particular group preferred to wear black clothes to accentuate their identity as a secret force. Although their actual number did not exceed three hundred, including a dozen foreigners from France, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, their operations appear to have been more effective than the efforts of 7,000 LJ combatants, which is not unthinkable, given the sophisticated weapons they had received from abroad. They played an important role in teaching local Muslim militias the technology of assembling bombs.³⁴ Inevitably, given their

³⁰ Sukidi Mulyadi, "Violence under the Banner of Religion: The Case of Laskar Jihad and Laskar Kristus," *Studia Islamika-Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 10,2 (2003): 77-101.

³¹ Van Klinken, *Small Town Wars*; Tjitske Lingsma, "Het Leger als Kwade Genius," *Vrij Nederland*, July 22, 2000, pp. 12-13.

³² See Kirsten E. Schulze, "Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9,1 (Spring 2002): 57-69.

³³ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

³⁴ Confidential interview with a member of a local Muslim militia group, Ambon, April 2003.

doctrinal differences, the Pasukan Khusus of Laskar Jihad and the Laskar Khos of Laskar Mujahidin, both of which were identified by the media or among Christians as "the Laskar Jihad," often displayed mutual hostility.

Laskar Mujahidin emerged as the favorite outside jihad group among local Muslim militias. There was no doubt of this, because its strategy was approved and, in contrast to Laskar Jihad, it did not criticize the religious beliefs and practices of local Muslims. As viewed by local Muslim militias, Laskar Jihad fighters were skillful only in reading the Qur'an and preaching to people to follow their doctrines. They conspicuously lacked the required tactical and strategic skills. A leader of a local Muslim militia group declared that he had several times warned Laskar Jihad fighters of their tactical carelessness when participating in attacks against Christians. He said that the stupidity displayed by Laskar Jihad combatants frequently nullified the tactics and strategies deployed by other Muslims. Before engaging in combat, local Muslim militias usually surveyed their target, drew up a plan of attack, and prepared their weaponry. They moved as small, skilled combat units. Such practical strategies were usually cast to the winds by Laskar Jihad fighters, who preferred to carry out sporadic attacks openly. This same leader asserted that the Laskar Jihad's inability to design proper strategies and tactics made it more a target than a threat for the enemies of Muslims.³⁵ Viewed from this perspective, Laskar Jihad's achievement in the Moluccas was, in many ways, strikingly limited.

Leaving aside these aspersions on their martial qualities, what appears to have been more interesting about Laskar Jihad fighters was perhaps their pioneering efforts to conduct socio-religious activities. These efforts were deemed to be part of jihad. Shortly after their arrival in the Moluccas, they provided social services, such as garbage disposal, that had stopped functioning at the outbreak of the conflict. They also set up a dozen primary schools in abandoned school buildings. True to their stated purpose, they set up numerous Qur'anic learning centers called "Al-Manshurah" and rehabilitated mosques that eventually fell into their possession. In a praiseworthy endeavor, they succeeded in building a medical clinic bearing the name of Laskar Jihad Medical Team, AhMed, in Kebun Cengkeh, that provided health services free of charge. Initially, this clinic was built to give first aid to the victims of the conflict.

RAJM

To reinforce their presence in the Moluccas and shore up their image as the heroes of the heroes, Laskar Jihad volunteers actively campaigned for the implementation of the *shari'a*. In various cities, they conducted sweeps on lairs of "vice," such as gambling dens, liquor and drug stores, and brothels. In Pekanbaru in June 2000, for instance, they destroyed homes of residents and kidnapped four men accused of being brokers of vice. On another occasion, they even burnt down one hundred properties they suspected of harboring prostitution. In Solo, they destroyed a number of cafes in collaboration with other militant groups.³⁶ Indubitably, the main zone of their operations was Ambon. In this town, they arrested a number of prominent figures in the vice trade and imposed harsh sentences. They are even said to have executed three drug dealers. In these situations, they acted as a vigilante

³⁵ Confidential interview with a local militia group leader, Ambon, April 2003.

³⁶ "Sepekan Mencekam di Kota Bengawan," *Adil*, December 10, 2000.

police force, enjoining good and eliminating evil (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). Prepared to cleanse the town of vice, they were extremely proud of recounting how they had intimidated frightened Moluccans who had become the targets of their operations. Thalib claimed these efforts were a step towards bringing the Moluccan Muslims back to the right path, in accordance with the example set by the *Salaf al-Salih* (pious ancestors).³⁷

As the demands for the implementation of the *shari'a* were more fluently articulated across the country, Laskar Jihad fighters attempted to prove that they were indeed ready to espouse the *shari'a*. At the end of March 2001, they enforced a *rajm* sentence, death by stoning, on one of their fighters who had raped a local girl. Again Thalib emerged as the main actor, the protagonist leading the execution. Having received the indictment from a woman who reported what had happened to her daughter, he ordered the provost team of Laskar Jihad to interrogate the suspect. Before him, the suspect confessed his guilt and declared that he was ready to receive any sentence.

Subsequently, Thalib called a meeting with a dozen members of the advisory body of FKAJ (Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet), who were present in Ambon, to discuss technical aspects of the execution of the sentence. Some took the initiative of requesting a fatwa from Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali of Saudi Arabia via telephone; al-Madkhali was said to have given an affirmative reply. In order to legitimate the procedure, the advisory board asked the suspect to write a confession and make a declaration that he had sincerely accepted the *rajm*, while giving him the chance to reconsider his confession. But the suspect was said to have been resolute about accepting his punishment.³⁸

For the execution, hundreds of Laskar Jihad fighters, joined by a dozen local Muslim leaders, assembled in a field in Ahuru. Guarded by the Provost Team of Laskar Jihad, the suspect walked slowly towards a prepared hole. Having been placed in the hole, the suspect's body was covered with soil up to his neck. Standing five meters from the hole, Thalib observed the whole process, displaying himself as an authority, like a *qadi* (Muslim judge) in medieval Islam. Before the sentence was handed down, he gave a sermon explaining the magnitude of the *rajm* sentence. "What we do will be regarded by Allah as a sign of sincerity in upholding the religion of Allah, because of which Allah will bestow victory upon us in our jihad," said Thalib.³⁹

Having delivered the sermon, Thalib approached the suspect and asked again whether he sincerely accepted the sentence. The suspect was said to have nodded his head while saying, "With the will of God, I am sincere." Mohammad Attamimy, a leader of Moluccan Muslims, suggested the suspect withdraw his confession, but this suggestion was apparently rejected.⁴⁰ A heartrending scene occurred when the suspect conveyed his last will. He apparently wanted to kiss the hand of Thalib. While giving his hand, Thalib ordered his fighters to start stoning. This stoning lasted for around a quarter hour. According to an eye-witness, after checking the

³⁷ Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

³⁸ Interview with Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Yogyakarta, December 2002.

³⁹ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Laskar Jihad Tegakkan Hukum Allah: Rajam Anggotanya yang Melakukan Zina," www.laskarjihad.or.id (March 2001).

⁴⁰ Interview with Mohammad Attamimy, Ambon, April 2003.

pulse of the suspect, a medical worker of Laskar Jihad clinic raised his hand to indicate that the accused was already dead.⁴¹

The police arrested Thalib at Juanda Airport in Surabaya on his journey back to Yogyakarta. He was accused of torturing to death one of his followers and of incitement to criminal violence. In reaction to this arrest, a number of conservative Muslim organizations including DDII, KISDI (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam, Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World), BKPMI (Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren seluruh Indonesia, Islamic Boarding School Cooperative Council of Indonesia), and Perguruan Islam al-Syafi'iyah (Al-Syafi'iyah Islamic Institution of Learning) organized a gathering in front of DDII headquarters in Jakarta, attended by the leaders of these organizations: Hartono Mardjono, Hussein Umar, Kholil Ridwan, and Daud Rasyid. They stated their determination to defend Thalib.⁴²

The leaders of Majelis Mujahidin displayed a similar reaction. Irfan S. Awwas, the executive chairman of the council, stated that the arrest of Thalib had been motivated more by political interest in restricting militant Muslim groups rather than by any genuine legal consideration. Muhammad Rizieq Syihab and Muhammad Husein al-Habsyi, the leaders of the Front Pembela Islam and the Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia, respectively, also demanded his release. The same demand was even made by some Muslim organizations of the establishment, including the Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, and Persis. A number of Islamic political parties, such as PPP, PBB, PK and PAN, immediately voiced their support for Thalib and mobilized their supporters to pressure the police. In Ambon, local Muslim leaders such as Ali Fauzy, Abdul Wahab Polpoke, Mohammad Attamimy, and Muhammad Husni Putuhena organized a demonstration in front of Al-Fatah Mosque, demanding the police act justly.⁴³

Partly because of the demands of the aforementioned Muslim organizations, the police released Thalib and changed his legal status to that of house detainee. Following the pre-judicial trial, which determined that his arrest was illegal, the police eventually absolved Thalib of all indictments.

What is of interest here is that, by imposing the *rajm* sentence, Thalib elevated his position in the unofficial hierarchy of Indonesian Islam's leaders. He became known not only as a jihad leader, but also as one of the vanguard who supported comprehensive implementation of the *shari'a*. It was as though he had challenged those who had previously spoken out about the need to return to the Jakarta Charter to step forward and prove their commitment to Islam. DDII, in collaboration with nine Islamic media, including *Saksi*, *Sabili*, *Ummi*, *Tarbawi*, Radio As-Syafi'iyah, *Annida*, *Eramuslim.com*, *Media Dakwah*, and *Suara Hidayatullah*, then bestowed on him an award called the Shari'a Award and gave the family of the victim the so-called "friendship donation."⁴⁴

⁴¹ This event became the subject of national media reports. See Sukirno, "Ikhlâs Dihukum Rajam," *Republika*, May 10, 2001; and Taufik Abriansyah and Endang Sukendar, "Perintah Rajam Panglima Ja'far," *Gatra*, May 12, 2001.

⁴² "Beberapa Pengacara Siap Bela Panglima Laskar Jihad," www.berpolitik.com, May 5, 2001.

⁴³ Dwitri Waluyo et al., "Jalan Sulit Menjepit Syariat Laskar Jihad," *Gatra*, May 19, 2001, p. 25.

⁴⁴ See Adian Husaini, *Rajam dalam Arus Budaya Syahwat: Penerapan Hukum Rajam di Indonesia dalam Tinjauan Syariat Islam, Hukum Positif & Politik Global* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2001). See also "Abdullah, Sosok Mujahid Mukhlisin," *Media Dakwah*, June 2001, pp. 54-5.

WINNING THE BATTLE WITH THE MEDIA

The greatest achievement of Laskar Jihad was perhaps its successful dissemination of propaganda and directing of public opinion through the media. As I have noted in an earlier chapter, before dispatching its volunteers, the organization had published *Maluku Hari Ini* (Moluccas Today), a pamphlet printed on a single double-sided sheet of paper presenting information about day-to-day developments in the Moluccan conflict—notably, the fighting between Muslims and Christians and the activities of Laskar Jihad. Utilizing the Internet, the pamphlet could instantly reach readers scattered throughout the country where Laskar Jihad branch offices had been established. Each branch office only needed to download the messages, which were already laid out in a desktop publishing format. Copies were distributed free of charge in public places and mosques, particularly for the consumption of those coming for Friday congregation.

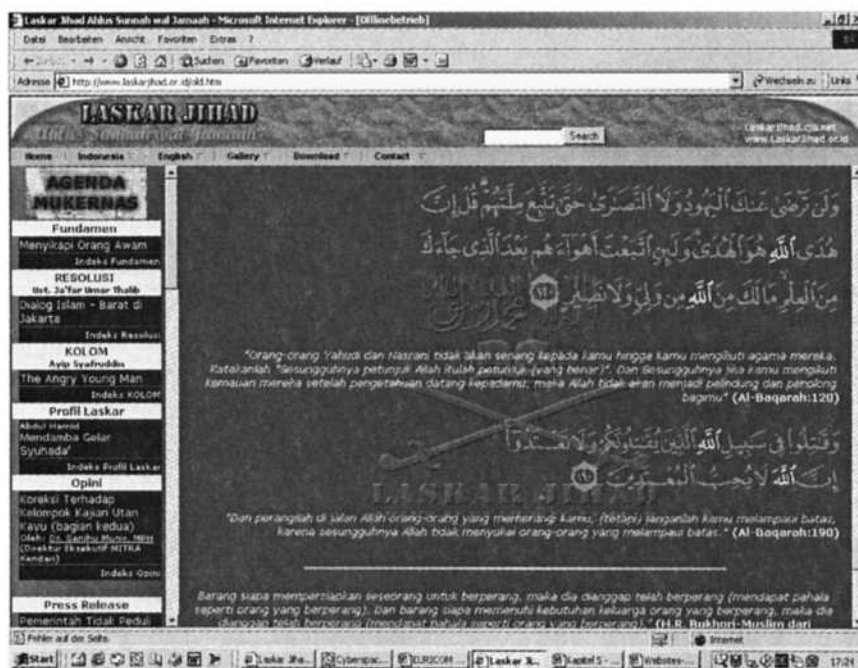


Figure XV: *Laskar Jihad Online* extolling the slogan, “*Berjihad di Dunia Maya*” (Jihad in Cyberspace).

Simultaneous with the dispatch of its fighters to the Moluccas, Laskar Jihad took a leap into cyberspace. It set up *Laskar Jihad Online* at www.laskarjihad.or.id, which provided information pertaining to its activities, stories concerning the developments in the Moluccan conflict, and sermons about the religious significance of jihad. It also featured stories and links to the websites of various jihad groups around the world, including those in Chechnya, Kashmir, and Afghanistan. Laskar Jihad claimed that its website was created in an effort to counterbalance the domination of cyberspace by the Christian media. The website became an interactive channel linking Laskar Jihad with people all over the world. *Laskar Jihad Online* was

bilingual. The English edition was said to have been edited by an Australian sympathetic to Thalib's organization.⁴⁵

Laskar Jihad Online extolled a slogan, "*Berjihad di Dunia Maya*" (Jihad in Cyberspace), complete with a banner that read "Victory or Martyrdom: Jihad in Ambon." The slogan highlighted two Qur'anic verses on the website to support the image of the Moluccan conflict as a religious war. Often quoted by militant Muslims to legitimize their hostility towards Jews and Christians, these verses read: "Jews and Christians will never allow Muslims to exist until the Muslims follow their religions" (Q 2,120); and "Muslims are obliged to fight against those who fight against them" (Q 2,190). The quotations justified and legitimized the hostile discourse broadcast through this website, and this, in turn, shaped the identity of the people behind it. By the skillful management of this website, *Laskar Jihad* sought to create a resilient image of its heroic efforts to save the Moluccan Muslims who were in danger of being slaughtered by Christian enemies.⁴⁶ The stories about atrocities committed by Christians were portrayed in different ways and backed up by a gallery of photographs adroitly framed within a narrative that called for defending the integrity of the Indonesian nation-state from the attacks of rebels. Such presentation bolstered the value of *Laskar Jihad*'s struggle in the Moluccas.

Aware that only a limited number of *Laskar Jihad*'s members and Indonesian Muslims in general had access to the Internet, *Laskar Jihad* subsequently published the *Buletin Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, again using the logo of two crossed sabers, with a picture of the Qur'an and the Muslim profession of faith in Arabic letters placed in between them. This sixteen-page, large layout, weekly bulletin featured color photos and advertisements. Compared to the images in the *Maluku Hari Ini* or *Laskar Jihad Online*, the colorful photos of Muslim victims and destroyed mosques in this bulletin appeared more real, complemented by stories of the ferocity of Christian attacks on Muslims. The bulletin was offered to the public "free of charge" by *Laskar Jihad* members standing at intersections, traffic lights, mosques, and at other public venues.

Besides the aforementioned media propaganda distributed on a national scale, *Laskar Jihad* set up a radio station in Kebun Cengkeh, Ambon, as a part of its efforts to disseminate its jihad messages. Named *Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku* (the Voice of the Struggle of Moluccan Muslims) and broadcast on 05.5 FM, it was highly effective in building lines of communication between *Laskar Jihad* fighters and Ambonese Muslims. Its broadcasts unfailingly sought to fuel militancy and a fighting spirit among Muslims in Ambon. Every day, recordings of religious sermons

⁴⁵ Interview with Adib Susanto, Jakarta, October 2002.

⁴⁶ For a further account on the use of the internet by *Laskar Jihad*, see Birgit Bräuchler, "Der Molukkenkonflikt Online: Religion, Identität, und Imagined Communities im Internet" [The Moluccan Conflict Online: Religion, Identity, and Imagined Communities on the Internet] (PhD dissertation, University of Munich, 2003); and Birgit Bräuchler, "Cyberidentities at War: Religion, Identity, and the Internet in the Moluccan Conflict," *Indonesia* 75 (April 2003): 123-151. See also Merlyna Lim, "@rchipelago Online, The Internet and Political Activism in Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, Universiteit van Twente, 2005).



Figure XVI: The *Buletin Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, the mouthpiece of Laskar Jihad.

by a number of Salafi preachers, religious lessons, and recitations of the Qur'an were played on the air. In one of its favorite programs, it broadcast the following contemplative passage:

...When our national flag is trampled, our hearts are wounded. We have nothing, except the belief in the greatness of this country. We are convinced that this country will be victorious should we but return to the way of Allah. Let us remove parasites. Let us march in step to sweep out rebellious groups ... We are not afraid of death. Indeed we are pursuing martyrdom. The most important thing for us is peace in Heaven. We believe that when we die on the battlefield, the wind of Heaven will welcome us. We are looking forward to achieving that moment ...⁴⁷

A dozen Moluccan Muslims I interviewed praised this radio station, claiming that it was the only effective means of communication, particularly when clashes blocked their access to other villages and the city of Ambon. They were convinced that messages broadcast by this station played a crucial role in maintaining their spirit to survive and win battles. Here Laskar Jihad proved its capability to use the media to shore up its image as the defender of the Moluccan Muslims and thereby reach its ends. Robert Hefner even argues that the skillful use of media technologies

⁴⁷ Radio Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku, "Syair-Syair Perjuangan," from "Tasjilat al-Mulk Cassette Record" (Ambon: FKAWJ, 2000).

allowed Laskar Jihad to outflank Indonesia's mainstream organizations and tout a militantly anti-Christian and anti-pluralist interpretation of Islam.⁴⁸

CHANGING PLOT

Shifts in the political landscape determine the sustainability of a drama staged in a transitional situation. Four or five months after the arrival of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas, the room to maneuver that had been available to this group began to narrow. This was particularly felt after pressures exerted by various elements in Indonesian society and the international community succeeded in forcing the Indonesian government to take necessary political measures. Having declared the Moluccas to be a civilian emergency zone and appointed the governor of the province, M. Saleh Latuconsina, the civilian emergency authority, in August 2000, Abdurrahman Wahid ordered TNI to send in Yon Gab (TNI combined battalion), which consisted of the elite troops of the army, navy, and air force, namely, the Kopassus (Special Armed Force), Korps Marinir (Marine Corps), and Korps Pasukan Khas (Special Force Corps), respectively. Under the command of the then Kodam Pattimura commander, Max Tamaela, the battalion was ordered to sweep away all armed militia groups involved in the Moluccan conflict.

Yon Gab immediately launched its operation, arresting hundreds of armed militia group members and military and police personnel who had sided with either Muslim or Christian parties. Indeed, the involvement of military personnel and the police in pacifying the combatants became one of the most remarkable phenomena of this conflict.⁴⁹ In one operation in Air Salobar, Yon Gab detained a dozen Laskar Jihad fighters accused of collecting guns and other standard military weapons, such as mortar launchers, bullet-proof vests, lifejackets, raincoats and thirty-seven assembled bombs. The arrests implanted a deep hatred of Yon Gab among Laskar Jihad fighters. After I Made Yasa replaced Max Tamaela as the commander of the Kodam Pattimura, Yon Gab intensified its operations. In January 2001, a dozen local Muslims and Laskar Jihad fighters were shot by Yon Gab personnel in Batu Merah. As a consequence, tensions between Laskar Jihad and Yon Gab escalated.

Tension reached its peak when Yon Gab attacked the Medical Clinic of Laskar Jihad in Kebun Cengkeh, the area where most of its fighters were concentrated, killing twenty-four Laskar Jihad fighters and injuring thirty-four others. This so-called Kebun Cengkeh tragedy took place on June 24, 2001. I Made Yasa stated that this was a defensive action, made necessary because armed militias hiding behind the clinic had attacked Yon Gab. He claimed that his troops were forced to counterattack to put the militia's weaponry out of commission. Laskar Jihad stoutly refuted all explanations given by I Made Yasa and demanded the government investigate.⁵⁰ It even issued a fatwa demanding his death.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Robert W. Hefner, "Civic Pluralism Denied: The New Media and Jihadi Violence in Indonesia," in *New Media in the Muslim World*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, second ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 158-79.

⁴⁹ See Bina Bektiati et al., "Jurus Baru Membabat Para Desertir" and "Alumni Galala dan Pasukan Siluman," *Tempo*, June 16, 2002, pp. 24-26.

⁵⁰ Laskar Jihad published a book explaining its own version of the chronology of this incident. See Ayip Syafruddin and Eko Prasetyo, *Tragedi Kebun Cengkeh: Fakta Pembantaian Paramedis, Pasien dan Warga Sipil Ambon* (Jakarta: Jihad Press, 2002).

Sympathy poured in from a number of Muslim organizations and nearly made Laskar Jihad a rallying point for Indonesian Muslims. Conservative Muslim leaders inside and outside the Moluccas, including Ali Fauzy, Abdul Wahab Polpoke, Rustam Kastor, Husein Syihab al-Habsyi, and Fuad 'Abd Allah Muhammad al-Habsyi, among others, condemned Yon Gab and demanded the government conduct a comprehensive investigation. The Council of Indonesian 'Ulama set up an investigation team led by Husein Umar of DDIL, with members drawn from various Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Because of the pressure from those parties, the National Commission of Human Rights sent an independent investigation team to the region. At the end of June 2001, I Made Yasa was removed from his position. Laskar Jihad subsequently demanded he accept responsibility for his actions, asking the Tim Pengacara Muslim (Muslim Attorney Team, TPM) led by Mahendradatta to charge him with murder.⁵²

The Kebun Cengkeh case can be considered the turning point of Laskar Jihad's venture in the Moluccas. After that, the group no longer had the space to present its jihad drama effectively. Djoko Santoso, who came to replace I Made Yasa, acted more circumspectly in coping with the conflict, but did not tolerate the activities of any armed militia group. As a result, sweepings of Laskar Jihad by Yon Gab were frequently undertaken, a policy that may have helped explain the decrease in the bloody clashes between Muslims and Christians.

Changes in the political landscape had an impact on the relationship between the military and Laskar Jihad.⁵³ After January 2001, Wahid's position became much less stable. Various political powers demanded his resignation because of allegations of corruption in the Badan Urusan Logistik (Board of Logistics Affairs, Bulog). Determined to remain, Wahid issued a Presidential Decree dissolving the MPR, but MPR representatives met in an extraordinary session in July 2001, during which they unseated Wahid and appointed Megawati Sukarnoputri, who was known to have cordial ties with the senior military command, to replace him, while Hamzah Haz was chosen as vice-president.

Laskar Jihad fighters reacted promptly to the appointment of Megawati by organizing a gathering in Yogyakarta. Once again, they proclaimed their determination to sustain their jihad in the Moluccas and to send militia troops to other troubled regions.⁵⁴ But Laskar Jihad faced a dilemma, since Hamzah, one of its main allies, was now Megawati's vice-president. A few days after the Yogyakarta gathering, a Laskar Jihad delegation visited the office of Hamzah and declared to him that the appointment of Megawati, a woman, as president was a sin committed by all Indonesian Muslims. They reiterated the necessity to implement the *shari`a*, as if they were demanding the fulfillment of a promise Hamzah had made as leader of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan. Hamzah replied by asking them to embrace

⁵¹ Aries Kelana et al., "Fatwa Mati Kebun Cengkeh," *Gatra*, July 7, 2001, pp. 39-40. This fatwa was displayed online under the title "Fatwa Mati Untuk Pangdam Pattimura," on the now-defunct Laskar Jihad website, www.laskarjihad.or.id.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See Michael Davis, "Laskar Jihad and the Political Position of Conservative Islam in Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24,1 (April 2002): 26-27.

⁵⁴ "Ribuan Laskar Jihad Siap ke Poso," www.laskarjihad.or.id, August 7, 2001.

Islam as *rahmatan li'l-`alamin*, a blessing for the whole universe, and to cease their appeals to militancy and violence.⁵⁵

These changing national political conditions shed some light on the failure of Laskar Jihad to open a new front by sending its fighters to Poso, Central Sulawesi, when violence broke out there in August 2001. Like the Moluccas, this region had witnessed native Christians killing immigrant Muslims in riots that ensued following a street fight between youths of different ethnic groups at the end of 1998. Hundreds of schools, governmental buildings, and mosques and churches were burnt down, tens of thousands of residents were forced into refugee camps, thousands were injured, and thousands died. While noting the local nature of the conflict, Lorraine Aragon has called attention to its translocal and international dimension, arguing that religious loyalties aroused during the violence were communicated to international audiences sympathetic with each side in successful efforts to attract support.⁵⁶ Laskar Jihad sought to frame its call for jihad in Poso, as it had in the Moluccas, under the banner of the conspiracy theory accusing Zionist and (Christian) Crusader international forces as the parties responsible for the conflict.⁵⁷ Yet despite its success in sending some seven hundred fighters to the region and scattering them among a dozen camps built in cooperation with local Muslims, the organization failed to carry out significant action and was forced to retreat in a relatively short time.⁵⁸

Subsequently, Laskar Jihad made an effort to send its fighters to Aceh, a province that has long had to contend with the separatist movement Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Aceh Freedom Movement, GAM). Thalib visited this province in February 2002 and met a number of Acehnese leaders. He stated his visit was to help Muslims end the enduring conflict, thereby showing his commitment to the integrity of the Indonesian nation-state. At the same time, he revealed his disappointment with GAM, which had initially aimed at establishing an Islamic state, by stating that the movement had become engaged in a simple ethnic struggle and made itself subject to the interests of the West, particularly the United States.⁵⁹ Acehnese leaders without exception denounced Thalib as a proxy for hard-line elements in TNI, and his effort to send fighters to Aceh failed.⁶⁰

The same thing happened when Thalib visited Papua in his efforts to develop branch offices established by his lieutenants in Sorong, Jayapura, and Manokwari, and to wage jihad against the separatist movement Gerakan Papua Merdeka (Papua Freedom Movement, GPM). The Presidium of Papua Council and leaders of Muslim organizations, such as the chairman of the Papuan branch office of the Council of Indonesian `Ulama, strongly protested his visit. The secretary-general of the Presidium Papua Council, Thoha al-Hamid, stated that there was no reason for

⁵⁵ See "Laskar Jihad Berharap Pemerintah Serius Tangani Kasus Kerusuhan," *Kompas*, August 8, 2001. See also "Panglima Laskar Jihad Bertemu Wakil Presiden," www.laskarjihad.or.id, August 9, 2001.

⁵⁶ For a further account of this conflict, see Lorraine V. Aragon, "Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People," *Indonesia* 72 (October 2001): 45-79.

⁵⁷ Ayip Syafruddin, "Mengapa Laskar Jihad ke Poso?" *Buletin Laskar Jihad* 9 (2001).

⁵⁸ Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, December 2003.

⁵⁹ Ja`far Umar Thalib, "Selangkah Lagi AS Kuasai Aceh," *Buletin Laskar Jihad* 17 (2002).

⁶⁰ See "Anti Jihad di Serambi Mekah," *Forum Keadilan* 46, March 3, 2002, p. 61.

Laskar Jihad to come to Papua. He was convinced that the presence of Laskar Jihad would simply fuel conflict among Papuans themselves, since it would divide Papuans along the lines of religion, ethnicity, and race.⁶¹

POST-SEPTEMBER 11

In the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, Laskar Jihad had to confront not only the Indonesian government, but also the United States' administration. The United States saw Southeast Asia, and notably Indonesia, as one of the most important targets in the global campaign against terrorism owing to the emergence of radical Islamist groups in the country suspected of being linked with al Qaeda terrorist cells. This suspicion was reinforced by the wave of anti-Americanism in reaction to George W. Bush's determination to retaliate against the terrorist network that had destroyed the World Trade Center by bombing Afghanistan when its leaders refused to give up Bin Laden, whom Washington suspected of being responsible for the September 11 attacks. Islamic groups condemned the attack on Afghanistan and demanded the government sever its diplomatic ties with the United States. In some cities, demonstrations were followed by arson, as American flags and the billboards for McDonald's and KFC franchise restaurants were set on fire.

Allegations linking Laskar Jihad—as well as two other paramilitary organizations, Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia—to al Qaeda multiplied. The then United States Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert S. Gelbard, expressed concern about Laskar Jihad, saying: "We're not dealing with a group here which is armed with heavy weapons, but still I consider them dangerous."⁶² He even suggested that the group leader, Thalib, had had more contacts with Bin Laden than he was willing to admit.⁶³ Newspapers and magazines published in the United States and other countries reported on the relationship between Thalib and Bin Laden, pointing to their encounter during the Afghan War, and suggesting that the Laskar Jihad commander might pose an equal threat.

The New York Times, for instance, published an article outlining the possible links between the two figures. After reporting that for the previous two years Bin Laden had been working to establish a beachhead in the world's most-populous Muslim nation—where members of his organization had distributed millions of dollars to radical Islamic organizations, recruited members, and provided military training—the article suggested that Thalib should be taken very seriously by the United States government because he was "as dangerous as Bin Laden." It reported that Thalib was in Afghanistan during the 1980s and had met with Bin Laden in Peshawar in 1987.⁶⁴ In another article, *The New York Times* again reported the linkage, challenging a statement by Thalib assigning Bin Laden full responsibility for the attack on the World Trade Center. Exacerbating matters, the newspaper quoted Harold Crouch, an

⁶¹ See "Militant Indonesians in Papua," *CNN*, April 19, 2002.

⁶² Ian Timberlake, "Religious War Brews in Indonesia's Sulawesi District, Christians Take to Hills after Muslim Attacks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 14, 2001.

⁶³ "Notes on Ambassador Robert Gelbard's Remarks At AICC Meeting on April 6, 2002," posted by the American Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, at www.aiccusa.org/042502alert.htm.

⁶⁴ Raymon Bonner and Jane Perlez, "A Nation Challenged: Asian Terror, al Qaeda Moving into Indonesia, Official Fear," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2002.

Indonesian observer from the Australian National University, claiming that a number of Laskar Jihad fighters were capable of piloting aircraft.⁶⁵ The Indonesian weekly *Tempo* criticized these reports as products of American paranoia in the wake of the September 11 tragedy.⁶⁶

Certainly, Thalib denied all allegations, although he admitted that he had met with Bin Laden and that a Bin Laden envoy had met him in Ambon and offered financial support and weaponry. In interviews, he accused Bin Laden of being a sectarian Muslim (*khariji*), ignorant of proper Islam, thus repeating the harsh criticism of Bin Laden he had published in the journal *Salafy* seven years earlier. *Laskar Jihad Online* published a fatwa by the highest Saudi *ʿulama* declaring that Bin Laden deviated from proper Islam because of his rebellion against the Saudi Arabian government, and the site removed its list of links to jihad groups throughout the rest of the Muslim world.

Bending under the pressure, Thalib sought to repair alliances with established Muslim organizations. He appeared in a number of public discussions and meetings with Muslim leaders, including in the Islam-West Dialogue initiated by the Muhammadiyah and attended by the United States and British Ambassadors, Ralph L. Boyce and Richard Gozney, respectively. His presence there drew criticism from his lieutenants, who condemned his inconsistency and opportunism. From this moment on, fragmentation inside the Laskar Jihad organization became palpable.⁶⁷ It was aggravated by the success achieved by the Governor of the Moluccas, who had set up the Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku (the Council of United Moluccan Muslims, BIMM), which Laskar Jihad criticized as a product of government design. Chaired by Ali Fauzy, this council was responsible for efforts at reconciliation between Muslims and Christians initiated by the local government.⁶⁸

In spite of Thalib's endeavors to deny any association between his group and al Qaeda, the sustainability of Laskar Jihad, which was also damaged by a financial crisis, was difficult to maintain. Megawati, who became the first state leader to visit President Bush after September 11, apparently had no choice but to demonstrate her commitment to join the international coalition against terrorism. Under her administration, militants associated with Jama'ah Islamiyah were detained. These arrests also entailed the interrogations of a dozen Laskar Jihad fighters, spreading alarm among other fighters. Caught in this unpleasant situation, Thalib increasingly lost support and, with it, the hope of sustaining his drama.

Thalib still attempted to negotiate and reinforce the position of Laskar Jihad by sending hundreds of his recruits, who just returned home from the Moluccas, to Ngawi in East Java in January 2002, in the hope of mobilizing sympathy and support from other conservative Muslim groups. They attacked gambling dens and other places of "vice" owned by a local PDI-P activist, but encountered strong resistance from the party's security force. Each side lost a dozen men, and police arrested several dozen Laskar Jihad members, some of whom blamed their own leader for

⁶⁵ Andrew Marshall, "The Threat of Jaffar," *The New York Times*, March 10, 2002.

⁶⁶ Irfan Budiman et al., "Ja'far Umar Thalib Setara Usamah bin Ladin?" *Tempo*, March 24, 2002, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁷ Interview with Eko Raharjo, the chairman of the information division of FKAWJ, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

⁶⁸ Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, April 2003.

their prolonged imprisonment when he apparently failed to procure their release.⁶⁹ Disappointment in Thalib spread among his followers.

In tandem with the increasing pressure that Laskar Jihad felt after September 11, opposition to its jihad arose among Indonesian Muslims advocating liberal Islam. Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network, JIL), established in March 2001 by young Muslim thinkers under the leadership of Ulil Absar Abdalla, led this opposition. The group's rise was welcomed by moderate Muslims of the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, who had felt increasingly frustrated and hobbled by the spread of religious radicalism. In organizing their programs, the Liberal Islam Network received considerable financial support from the American funding agencies, notably the Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation.

The proliferation of liberal Islamic discourse in favor of democracy, human rights, gender equality, freedom of thought, and progressiveness became the main goal of the Liberal Islam Network. Proponents consistently rejected the concept of totality in Islam, the imposition of the *shari'a* by the state, the identification of jihad with armed holy war, and gender inequality.⁷⁰ In short, they advocated policies that were compatible with the interests of the funding foundations, which, within the framework of the United States' global campaign against radical Islam, sought to support activities of liberal groups across the world to undermine their radical foes.⁷¹ In order to reach a broad audience, they used various media channels, including the Internet, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. They regularly opened discussion forums, published articles in various newspapers, and broadcast talk shows with liberal Muslim thinkers.

The open opposition voiced by the Liberal Islam Network triggered anger among a number of radical Islamist leaders, including Thalib and Muhammad Rizieq Syihab. They accused the organization of being part of the conspiracy to destroy Islam. According to Thalib, the distinction between Laskar Jihad and the Liberal Islam Network was equivalent to the distinction between Islam and *kufir* (infidelity); in this way, he implicitly excommunicated his liberal opponents. Some radical Islamist group members attacked one Liberal Islam Network supporter when the latter published an article the former considered disrespectful to Islam. Their criticism reverberated loudly in the Islamist media. *Suara Hidayatullah*, for instance, condemned liberal Muslims as masked secularists who rejected totality in Islam.⁷² It published a feature predicting the destruction of the Indonesian nation-state because of the proliferation of liberal Islam's ideas.⁷³

It is worth mentioning that the birth of the Liberal Islam Network marked a widespread rise of consciousness among mainstream Muslim organizations, such as the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, that represent the majority of

⁶⁹ Interview with Abdurrahman Abu Khalid, the leader of the Laskar Jihad mission to Ngawi, Yogyakarta, January 2003.

⁷⁰ See the website of the Liberal Islam Network, www.islamlib.com.

⁷¹ An illustration of the actual agenda behind the sort of "Liberal Islam" that America is now so feverishly seeking to promote is provided by a recent report prepared by the RAND Corporation. See Cheryl Bernard, "Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies," www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1716.

⁷² "Islam Liberal, Sekularis Berkedok Muslim," *Suara Hidayatullah*, February 2002.

⁷³ Abdillah Razak, Idris Rustamaji, "Tragedi Presiden Uzil Bashar Afdhalla" and "Jakarta, Maret 2038," *Suara Hidayatullah*, February 2002.

Indonesian Muslims and work to disseminate discourses advocating interreligious harmony, democracy, egalitarianism, and gender equality. The leadership of both organizations sought to encourage the creation of nongovernmental organizations, which became centers where potential scholars work to spread bold new thinking about the issues of pluralism, the inclusiveness of Islam, and gender equality. At the same time, they continued to exercise a profoundly moderating and democratic influence on Islam and Indonesian politics through their campaigns asserting that Islam and democracy are compatible and their condemnation of Islamic radicalism. They not only rejected proposals to implement the *shari`a* but also organized meetings to condemn terrorist actions committed in the name of Islam. To them, terrorism cannot be tolerated, since it is in total opposition to Islam.

MALINO AGREEMENT

Its own commitment to support the global campaign against terrorism forced the Indonesian government to intensify its efforts to bring the antagonists in the Moluccas to the negotiation table. The Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Yusuf Kalla, and the Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, met in Malino, South Sulawesi, with representatives of Muslim and Christian parties. On February 13, 2002, seventy members of the Christian and Muslim delegations signed the Second Malino Agreement (*Kesepakatan Malino II*), an eleven-point joint declaration that promised, among other things:

1. To end all conflict and violence;
2. To abide by due process of law, which is to be enforced fairly, honestly, and consistently with the support of the whole Moluccan society ;
3. To reject all separatist movements, including aspirations to establish a Republic of South Moluccas (RMS);
4. To emphasize the rights of the Moluccan people to stay and work legally in the Republic of Indonesia nationwide and in the Moluccan province by respecting the local culture and law and order;
5. To ban and disarm illegal armed organizations, groups, or militias, in accordance with the existing law; outside parties that disturb the peace in the Moluccas will be expelled from the islands;
6. To set up a national independent investigation team to investigate thoroughly the incident of January 19, 1999 and the alleged involvement of FKM, RMS, Christian RMS, and Laskar Jihad, as well as incidences of forced conversion and other human rights violations.⁷⁴

The Malino Agreement eventually closed the space that had enabled Laskar Jihad's to stage its drama. Under this agreement, Laskar Jihad was to be expelled from the Moluccas. Thalib repeatedly refused to withdraw his fighters and instead attempted to gain the support of different parties.⁷⁵ Some support came from the leaders of local Muslim groups in the islands, including M. Husni Putuhena and Mohammad Attamimy, who argued that the parties who signed the accord were not

⁷⁴ See "Butir-butir Perjanjian Malino," *Kompas*, May 5, 2002; see also S. Sinansari Ecip, *Bila Cengkeh Tak Berbunga (Membuka Rusuh Ambon)* (Jakarta: Cahaya Timur, 2003), pp. 154-55.

⁷⁵ Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Mustahil Menarik Laskar Jihad," interview, *Tempo*, May 26, 2002, p. 27.

proper representatives of Muslims and Christians. But all Thalib's efforts apparently failed, since the Moluccan antagonists, the Indonesian government, and the security apparatus were not willing to compromise with any party defying the agreement. They continued to insist that Laskar Jihad hand over its guns and retreat from the Moluccas.

Grasping the importance of the situation, Thalib sought to consolidate his support. He organized a series of gatherings in several places in Central Sulawesi and the Moluccas. In Ambon on April 24, 2002, he called on his fighters to maintain their spirit to wage jihad against Christians. He said war needed to continue because the Front Kedaulatan Maluku, led by Alex Manuputti, had intensified its activities by displaying RMS flags in the period leading up to the commemoration of the RMS anniversary on April 25, 2002. The day after, he broadcast "a war declaration" on Radio Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku. In it, he accused Governor M. Saleh Latuconsina, the civilian emergency authority, of collaborating with Protestant churches and RMS to undermine Islam and cited the display of RMS flags as proof. Similarly, he criticized the commander of the Kodam Pattimura and the head of Regional Police of the Moluccas and accused them of links to Christian detractors. He warned these three regional authorities to repent and return to the right path and asked his fighters to prepare themselves to wage a war to the last drop of blood:

We are grateful to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala praise be to the Almighty Who has chosen us as His soldiers. Allah's soldiers have been given a military obligation as stated by Allah, "Jihad is ordained for you though you dislike it, and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know!" Therefore, Allah has ordained the military obligation for us as Allah's soldiers ... We all place our trust in Allah, rejecting all forms of sweeping and the like. We are prepared to confront any type of armed vehicle. In fact, we are prepared to confront jet fighters or combat helicopters. We don't care. This is all part of a warning to the world. Listen, you accomplices of the United States. Listen, you accomplices of the World Council of Churches. Listen, you accomplices of Zionist evangelists. Listen, you Jews and Christians: We Muslims are inviting the US military to prove its power in the Moluccas. Let us fight to the finish. Let us prove for the umpteenth time that the Muslim faithful cannot be conquered by over-exaggerated physical power ... The second Afghanistan War will take place in the Moluccas if you are determined to carry out your threat, O America. Now you, the US, are suffering defeats, various terrifying strikes in Afghanistan. Let us meet gallantly on the field of battle ... ⁷⁶

This declaration can be read as the culmination of Thalib's frustration in the face of his failure to maintain his jihad drama in the Moluccas. It can also be read as a last futile effort to reinvigorate the spirit of his fighters and motivate them to return to the battlefield. Indeed, shortly after the declaration of war and the display of RMS flags by the Front Kedaulatan Maluku, a group of armed people attacked Soya, a Christian village near Kebun Cengkeh. This attack claimed twelve casualties; a church and twenty houses were burnt down. But a member of a local militia group I

⁷⁶ For a complete text, see www.angelfire.com/rock/hotburrito/laskar/spmm010502.html, July 29, 2002.

interviewed claimed that this attack was not conducted by Laskar Jihad, but by his own group instead.⁷⁷

Because of his declaration, the police arrested Thalib on May 4, 2002, on his return from Ambon. He was accused of having defamed the president and the civil emergency authority in the Moluccas. The day before, the police had arrested Alex Manuputti on suspicion of having planned a rebellion against the Indonesian government. Thalib's arrest provoked harsh reactions from hard-line Muslim leaders. Rizieq Syihab, Ba'asyir, Husein Umar, and Ahmad Sumargono came to police headquarters to demand his release. The vice-president, Hamzah Haz, visited him in prison and embraced him warmly, declaring that he too felt the arrest was politically motivated.⁷⁸ Ironically, however, no Laskar Jihad fighters came to visit him as they had after his arrest in April 2001.

In the absence of Thalib, Laskar Jihad organized the so-called National Workshop in Jakarta in May 2002, aimed at alleviating its negative image as a militia organization linked to al Qaeda. A number of high-ranking officials attended this workshop, which was opened by Hamzah. In their recommendations, participants asked the government to monitor the threat of separatism and widespread vice, including drugs, alcohol, gambling, prostitution, and pornography. They also asked the government to develop a religious education program as a prerequisite towards the establishment of a religious-moral-oriented society. In addition, they encouraged all Indonesian Muslims to continue the struggle for the implementation of the *shari'a* via constitutional channels.⁷⁹

THE END OF THE DRAMA

Just five days after the bombing of Paddy's Café and the Sari Club at Legian, Bali, on October 12, 2002, Laskar Jihad surprisingly disbanded. Thalib, who had been released in the meantime, gave a press conference stating that Laskar Jihad had been disbanded in accordance with the fatwa of Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, which demanded its dissolution because it had deviated from its original aim. Reverting to domestic matters, he admitted that the presence of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas was no longer needed because the situation there had become relatively secure and the security apparatus had proven capable of carrying out its duty properly.

Many people believed that the disbanding of Laskar Jihad was related to the release of Thalib, and assumed that his public admission that Laskar Jihad was no longer needed in the Moluccas had been made in exchange for his own release. But this speculation did not account for internal dynamics that contributed a great deal to the group's fate. Long before the bombs exploded in Bali, Laskar Jihad had, in fact, been afflicted by a financial crisis aggravated by the lieutenants' waning trust in their group's leaders. They held the commander, Thalib, and the chairman of FKAWJ, Syafruddin, responsible for making Laskar Jihad part of an embarrassing political game. As far as they were concerned, these two leaders had sold out Laskar Jihad for their own political interests. Their reluctance to visit Thalib when he was in jail and their absence from the national workshop in May 2002, which had been organized

⁷⁷ Confidential interview with a member of the group, Ambon, April 2003.

⁷⁸ See Edy Budiwarso, "Dari Medan Jihad ke Dalam Tahanan," *Tempo* (May 19, 2002): 27.

⁷⁹ "Rekomendasi Musyawarah Kerja Nasional 2002 Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaah," www.laskarjihad.or.id, May 23, 2002.

through the initiative of Syafruddin, clearly communicated their disappointment to the two leaders.

In fact, signs of this fragmentation had already appeared shortly after the Kebun Cengkeh incident. Some Salafi *ustadhs* on the advisory board of FKAJ began to feel that the political steps taken by Thalib had deviated from the original direction of Laskar Jihad's mission. A number of them, such as Abu Munzir Zul Akmal and Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain, requested clarification from Thalib. Dissatisfied with his explanation, they mobilized support from other Salafi *ustadhs* to work toward the disbanding of Laskar Jihad. As far as they were concerned, Laskar Jihad had strayed from Salafist doctrine because of the personal interests of its commander-in-chief, Thalib, and of the FKAJ chairman, Syafruddin.⁸⁰

Their disappointment mounted when Thalib began appearing on television side-by-side with a number of politicians and the leaders of various hard-line Muslim organizations whom he had previously accused of advocating the *da'wa hizbiyya* (partisan politics). Zul Akmal and Zulkarnain sent a letter to the Saudi scholar, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali, explaining the deviations committed by Thalib and requesting a fatwa concerning the existence of Laskar Jihad. In response, the mufti issued a fatwa recommending Laskar Jihad disband.

The two *ustadhs* were able to use this fatwa to mobilize further support from other Salafi *ustadhs* and main lieutenants of Laskar Jihad. To clarify the matter, they sent Usamah Faisal Mahri and Lukman Baabduh to Saudi Arabia to meet personally with Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali. In front of these two emissaries, Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali strongly criticized Thalib, saying that under the direction of Thalib, the Islamic Salafi jihad had resorted to a heretical political jihad that was no different from the jihad of the Muslim Brotherhood. As a result of this response, opposition to Thalib grew more widespread. The Salafi *ustadhs* associated with the FKAJ advisory body eventually organized a special session to discuss the disbanding of Laskar Jihad. It convened in October 2002 in Yogyakarta. Almost all *ustadhs* associated with the FKAJ advisory body were present. So was Thalib. But when he heard that the session had been called in order to dissolve Laskar Jihad, Thalib walked out. The session continued without him and finalized a five-point accord:

1. FKAJ and its paramilitary organization, Laskar Jihad, were set up solely for the magnificence of jihad for the cause of Allah on the basis of the Salafi *manhaj* (method) and fatwas of the Salafi *'ulama*;
2. In the struggle to wage jihad in the Moluccas, FKAJ and Laskar Jihad were committed to evaluate and correct themselves consistently, in line with the advice given by the *'ulama*;
3. In the course of time, however, FKAJ and Laskar Jihad appeared to have deviated from the Salafi *manhaj* and its moral principle because of some of their leaders had neglected to consistently follow the *shari'a*;
4. For these reasons, all participants of the session declared: To demand that the leaders directly repent all mistakes and deviations they had committed;
5. To convey gratitude to the prominent Salafi *'ulama* for their advice that FKAJ and Laskar Jihad should be banned.

⁸⁰ Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, a member of the advisory body of FKAJ, Yogyakarta, December 2003.

A delegation of eight *ustadhs* then went to meet Thalib and asked him to proclaim Laskar Jihad disbanded immediately. He was reportedly angry and strongly rejected the proposal. But the *ustadhs* persisted in asserting that all FKAWJ branches had approved of this judgment, and, consequently, FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad *de facto* no longer existed. They even stated that they were prepared to remove all remaining symbols of FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad from their buildings. Despite this pressure, Thalib held firm. Only after the Bali bombs exploded did he suddenly emerge to give a press conference and proclaim Laskar Jihad was disbanded.

Following this revolt against his leadership, Thalib was abandoned by all the *ustadhs* and lieutenants of Laskar Jihad. When I visited him in December 2002, he was alone. Even the students of the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah had moved to other Salafi *pesantrens*, continuing their studies with other Salafi *ustadhs*. Perhaps seeking new allies, or just company, Thalib had attended *Dhikr Akbar*, a Sufi-like practice of publicly chanting "the names of God," led by Muhammad Arifin Ilham in the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta on August 17, 2003. For many Salafi *ustadhs*, the presence of their former leader in such a program clearly indicated that he had deviated from the Salafi *manhaj*.⁸¹ In retrospect, some concluded that Laskar Jihad's mission in the Moluccas was a political maneuver by group leaders that had compromised and manipulated the sincere religious commitment of those who participated. Some even claimed that their participation was a "black stain" on their lives. This admission can be regarded as proof that the drama of jihad initiated by Thalib, and his attempt to become the grand hero of Indonesian Muslims, ended in failure.

⁸¹ See Qamar Su'aidi, "Ja'far Umar Thalib Telah Meninggalkan Kita," www.salafy.or.id, April 29, 2004.

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CONCLUSION

The rise of Laskar Jihad, which positioned itself at the front of a national Islamist discourse by declaring jihad in the Moluccas and other Indonesian trouble spots, was emblematic of widespread manifestations of Islamic radicalism in the post-New Order political landscape. The group emerged at a time when similar militant organizations, such as Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, had succeeded in achieving prominence on the Indonesian political stage and in pursuing various forms of popular politics. The group's sudden rise has prompted observers and analysts to associate its existence exclusively with the maneuvering of civilian and military elites anxious to preserve the status quo by mobilizing *preman* and jobless youths to enhance their position in endless rounds of political negotiations. As a counter to these speculations, I would suggest on the basis of my research that this phenomenon is the result of an interaction between the long-term dynamics of political Islam in the face of the authoritarianism of the state and the short-term repercussions of the highly disruptive transitional process following the collapse of the regime.

As I have indicated, the social roots of Laskar Jihad can be traced back to the mid-1980s, when Salafi communities grew in number throughout Indonesia. The growth of these communities cannot be isolated from the immensely ambitious global campaign waged by Saudi Arabia for the Wahhabization of the Muslim *umma*. Through this campaign, Saudi Arabia tried to reinforce its position as the center of the Muslim world to counteract fading Arab nationalism that itself was a consequence of defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israel War. Thanks to skyrocketing world oil prices, which provided considerable economic benefits during the 1970s, the Kingdom was able to sponsor a variety of *da'wa* activities throughout the Muslim world, working with local agents to construct mosques and Islamic schools and publish and distribute Islamic books. In this way, Wahhabism was exported and disseminated. This campaign was later intensified, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution and the takeover of al-Haram al-Sharif by the Juhayman-led group in 1979.

Wahhabi influence reached Indonesia mainly through DDII (Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation), whose ambition to revive the political role of the Masyumi had failed, defeated by the New Order regime's implacable marginalizing of any expressions of Muslim 'politics. With generous Saudi financial support, DDII sponsored not only the construction of mosques and Islamic schools but also the dispatch of Indonesian youths to study in various Middle Eastern universities. In order to facilitate DDII attempts to intensify its campaign, Saudi Arabia established LPBA (Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab, Institute of Arabic Teaching) in Jakarta in 1980. This institute evolved into LIPIA (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab, Institute of the Study for Islam and Arabic), which has emerged as the center of Wahhabi influence in Indonesia. One of the most palpable impacts of this campaign was a sense of Islamic resurgence

on university campuses, marked by an increase in students' observation of Islamic obligations, an interest in wearing *jilbab*, and the spread of Islamist books.

As university students were inspired to express their Islamic identity more explicitly, a new type of Muslim intellectual imbued with the zeal to disseminate Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *da'wa* movement took center stage. Financially secure, such people found themselves in a position to set up foundations supported directly by philanthropic agents in the Middle East. Initially, their activism took place on university campuses, where they campaigned side by side with a number of other Islamic movements. In the course of time, they succeeded in establishing an exclusive Islamic movement that organized a variety of *da'wa* activities in mosques located both on the outskirts of cities and in villages. The shift in the state's attitude, as it became more willing to accommodate political Islam at the beginning of the 1990s, facilitated the expansion of the movement.

The history of the Salafi movement in this most populous of Muslim countries perfectly demonstrates how transnational politics have transcended established cultural and political boundaries and penetrated different cultural and political milieus. Here globalization displays its tremendous impact on twentieth-century Muslim politics. Technological advances born of globalization have made it possible to distribute the Islamic message globally; individuals have been able to claim and benefit from a global identity as members of a community of observant believers—the *umma*. But any determination of the impact of these global interactions must take into account their intersection with the dynamics of the relationship between Indonesian Islam and the Indonesian state in specific local contexts. Taken together, these two aspects might explain the divergent manifestations of political Islam and their multiplicity in certain areas and at particular periods of time.

The rapid expansion of the Salafi movement was coupled with an eruption of tension among its protagonists, particularly following the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990. During this time, competition intensified among those who had just returned from Salafi teaching centers in the Middle East, many of whom hoped to establish themselves as the movement's legitimate representatives. As a result, fragmentation and conflict became inevitable. The movement split into two currents: the so-called *Sururis* and non-*Sururis*. Triggered by the *Sururiyya* issue, the division was fueled by Ja'far Umar Thalib's accusations against other Salafi leaders, including Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Yusuf Usman Baisa, Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Ahmad Zawawi, and Abdul Hakim Abdat; Thalib claimed that these leaders were sympathizers of Muhammad ibn Surur bin Nayef Zayn al-'Abidin, a critic of Saudi Arabia's decision to invite American troops to defend its territory from an apparently imminent invasion by Saddam Hussein. The main bone of contention actually concerned financial support from the Middle East. Because of this fragmentation, a clear distinction was drawn between the Salafis and the followers of other Islamic movements.

The establishment and growth of Laskar Jihad was determined to a great extent by the personal ambition of Thalib, its commander-in-chief. The central figure among Laskar Jihad fighters, he founded the organization, defined its direction, and determined the course of its activism. Born into a Hadrami family in Malang, East Java, and raised in the puritanical atmosphere of al-Irsyad, he emerged as a typical cadre of Islamism, an ambitious youth with a rebellious streak. He was a student at the Pesantren of Persis in Bangil, East Java, where he shaped his conception of Islamic reformism. Next, he moved to Jakarta to study at LIPIA, where he studied

Arabic and explored the militant views of Qutb, the most prominent spokesman of political Islam. Thalib's uncompromising attitude showed in his outspoken repudiation of the *asas tunggal* policy enforced by the New Order regime. After a falling out with a member of the teaching staff, he dropped out of LIPIA. In spite of this, LIPIA paved the way for him to study abroad at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1987.

The militancy of Thalib grew to maturity in Pakistan, where he was able to gain support for a trip to Afghanistan. Once in Afghanistan, he fought shoulder to shoulder with Afghan *mujahidin*. He was said to have assisted the factions of both Abu Sayyaf and Hikmatyar before joining the Jama'at al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith, a Saudi-supported faction led by Jamil al-Rahman, a fanatical adherent of Wahhabism. Within this faction, Thalib shared experiences with thousands of jihad volunteers from all over the Muslim world and established contacts with the transnational Salafi *da'wa* movement.

Thalib's involvement in the *da'wa* activities of the Salafi movement and his growing influence eventually overwhelmed Abu Nida, the movement's former leader, thereby reinforcing to some extent the central position of Hadramis in the history of Islamic reform in Indonesia. He became the most important figure in the informal social network interlocking a dozen Salafi teaching centers scattered throughout various regions in the country. This achievement was partly determined by his success in establishing a special linkage with Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, a Salafi ideologue *par excellence* in Yemen, and other prominent Salafi authorities in the Middle East. Its nonhierarchical and open character notwithstanding, this network played an important role in the spread of the Salafi movement and in the growth of Thalib's own fame. Lessons, study circles, informal meetings, and a myriad of other *da'wa* activities were firmly established in the network, serving as a vehicle for the production, articulation, and dissemination of Salafi messages. Its center was the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah led by Thalib, which published the periodical *Salafy* as its mouthpiece. Despite its remarkable influence, the network barely registered among Middle Eastern funding sources; as a result, it remained marginal and poor. "Established Salafi foundations" led by Thalib's rivals, however, received generous financial support. Thalib attempted to remedy this situation by exploiting the *Sururiyya* issue in hopes of seizing the advantage. But this attempt appears to have backfired, since it seems to have alienated the foundations and lost him their financial support, as these wealthy donors demanded that recipients of funds foster the unity and solidarity of the Salafis in working together to achieve the Salafi *da'wa* goals—in fact, this was an important funding criterion.

Despite the gloom overshadowing their work under these unfavorable conditions, the personal ties established between Thalib and his followers in the network continued to expand. These ties enabled him to make some efforts to mobilize the masses in an attempt to respond to a variety of actual political issues that arose in the wake of the disruption caused by the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997 and the ensuing transitional process. His ambitions to mobilize Salafis mounted after Thalib witnessed the success of Muhammad Rizieq Syihab and some other young Islamist figures, who won national attention by perpetrating sweeps of cafés, discotheques, casinos, and brothels, and staging demonstrations and rallies to demand the comprehensive implementation of the *shari'a*. At that moment, some Muslim allies, united in their attempts to preserve the status quo, seized the chance to utilize the Salafis associated with Thalib for their own political interests, as they

struggled to oppose the liberal political-civil forces that sought to establish democracy more firmly in Indonesia. Thalib realized it was the moment when he and his followers had to claim center stage, proclaiming their determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas.

Thalib asserted that his main reason for advocating jihad was that after almost one year the bloody communal conflict in the Moluccas continued to rage, claiming the lives of thousands of innocent Muslims. He took the Tobelo massacre of more than five hundred Muslims by Christians in December 1999 as an example to demonstrate the ferocity of the conflict. In this context, he strongly criticized Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia's president at the time, for showing indifference to the fate of Muslims in the islands and for failing to give proper protection to his citizens. This criticism reverberated loudly alongside the mounting rivalry between Wahid and his political contenders. While a dozen conservative Muslim leaders mobilized their own masses of supporters to voice their sympathy for the Moluccan Muslims, Thalib went a step further, issuing a jihad resolution. As far as he was concerned, jihad was essential to resist the intervention of United States-led international Zionist-Christian conspiracy forces—which allegedly sought to undermine Islam in Indonesia—in this escalating conflict.

The key to the success of Thalib in mobilizing fighters for jihad in the Moluccas was the presence of the pre-existing informal social network he had built among the Salafis. This network provided the foundation for the birth of FKAJ (Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Communication Forum of the Followers of the *Sunna* and the Community of the Prophet), which functioned as an umbrella organization charged with a special duty of coordinating various planned collective actions by the Salafis. The strength and cohesiveness of this network reduced the free-riding problem that so often dilutes the strength of volunteer organizations. Following the jihad resolution issued by Thalib, thousands of young Salafis from various regions in Indonesia reported to the branch offices of FKAJ, registering to join Laskar Jihad. The ability of Thalib to construct action frames, stressing the importance of jihad in the face of the challenges posed by the enemies of Islam, contributed a great deal to the formation of the organization. With powerful rhetoric, he unleashed the emotion of the Salafis and, at the same time, affected the sentiments of Islamic constituencies at large. His campaign was strengthened and legitimized by the fatwas from prominent religious authorities in the Middle East. On the basis of these fatwas, Thalib convincingly declared the Moluccan conflict to be a religious war between Muslims and Christians, a war that demanded the intervention of Muslims through jihad. Participation in this "war" was considered to be an individual duty. As such, and like prayer or fasting, according to Islamic law every Muslim is accountable for a failure to perform this duty.

The establishment of Laskar Jihad confirms that under certain conducive political circumstances, Islamic militant groups may elect to resort to violence, and this can happen even in nonpolitical wings that reject the use of revolution as a means to reach their final goal. As a *da'wa* community concerned with the purity of the faith and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals, the Salafis had previously considered political activism, not to mention violence, anathema to Islam. The resort to violence by Laskar Jihad proves that the repudiation of political activism by the Salafis was not a firm anchor of their doctrine; it was more a strategy to deal with the distressing and discouraging political situation that prevailed under an uncompromising, secular, ruling regime. The basic premises in their doctrines

were, in fact, political in nature. The themes of reform that centered on the issue of the Oneness of God, *tawhid*, even while isolated from any concept of revolutionary jihad, not only demanded that Salafis be concerned with the comprehensive implementation of the *shari'a*, but also required them to repudiate democracy and, consequently, the system of the nation-state. Adherents considered democracy to be in opposition to the principle of God's sovereignty, which derives from the absolute Oneness of God. More important perhaps, these themes provided the foundation for the call for jihad in the Moluccas, where it was regarded as a mechanism to defend Muslims from the attacks of "war-mongering infidels."

Furthermore, the fact that the Salafi community's decision to resort to violence went hand-in-hand with the radicalization of its discourse casts light on the significance of ideology in a militant Islamist movement: ideology is not static, but rather dynamic, and develops in line with the contextual changes. The ideology of a social movement is best understood in relation to the struggle of the movement's actors to exert control over the production of ideas; it does not merely stand as a carrier of extant ideas that flow in one direction from the movement's underlying strains. Yet the role of ideology remains crucial to the establishment of a social movement, serving primarily as an ethical, moral, and normative principle that guides individual members towards understanding the frame constructed by the movement's actors. In other words, ideology functions as a resource of culture at the service of framing.

Despite the central role of Thalib, the formation of Laskar Jihad was significantly determined by the readiness of thousands of Salafis to risk their lives by going to fight in the Moluccas. The recruits were generally young militants from small towns or villages in the countryside who had an *abangan* background. Just a few of them came from the families of the modern *santri*, particularly the Muhammadiyah. Because of the hurly-burly of the rapid modernization process, these young men had the opportunity to migrate to big cities in order to pursue higher education or seek jobs. Ironically, the social mobility of these youth was mired in the failure of the New Order regime to fulfill its development promises, particularly to make good on its promise to distribute public goods and resources for all. This deficiency was aggravated by rampant corruption and a lack of public accountability. As a result, many of these young people became discontented and frustrated. Globalization accelerated their frustration by challenging their identities. In response, to defend themselves, these deprived youths often chose to withdraw from the "anything goes" society around them. One option was to establish an enclave, a closed system that distinguishes itself by an exclusive pattern of dress, interactions, and relationships. By doing so, the members of the enclave achieve control of the social space by shrinking the world to the size of their community.

These deprived youths feel that jihad is one way to express their resentment and frustration. Their expression is primarily symbolic, being directed at the United States, which they consider to be the backbone of the hegemonic global powers responsible for all forms of injustice and chaos in the world. By joining in the drama of jihad staged by Thalib, members of this disaffected group had the opportunity to flaunt their new, religious identity and negotiate their illusory strength. Under the banner of jihad, they felt free to shout out, wave swords and challenge much more powerful—and often inaccessible—opponents. Therefore, among these youths, jihad is not only a language of protest in their attempts to break out of their own sense of frustration, but also a message trumpeted to resist their own sense of

marginalization. In this specific case, therefore, it was no surprise that Thalib's recruits competed to clamber on board the ships that would take them to the Moluccas and absorb them in a protracted bloody communal conflict in the islands.

While we must acknowledge the social roots of this discontent, we will best understand the jihad action launched by Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas by considering it as a drama, because this action was an endeavor by Thalib's Salafi followers to shore up their self-image as the most committed defenders of Islam, and thereby reinforce their identity. The entire campaign can be conceptualized as the politics of recognition pursued by the Salafis in order to gain a place in the transnational Salafi *da'wa* network and register themselves on the map of Indonesian Islam. Though this was indubitably the driving force, the staging of this drama was made possible by the considerable support from military elites who saw this moment as the opportunity to teach Wahid a lesson and undermine his ambitious attempts to implement the principle of civilian supremacy. Not only did the Indonesian military allow waves of Laskar Jihad fighters to drop anchor in the Moluccas, they also provided its Special Force with training and military weapons. This military backup fueled the fire of Laskar Jihad, which had already received significant support from various conservative Muslim organizations.

As it dispatched more than seven thousand fighters to the Moluccas, Laskar Jihad was able to change the balance in the Moluccan conflict in a relatively short time. The influx of its fighters, who brought with them the spirit of jihad, engaged the consciousness and zest of Moluccan Muslims to battle neighboring Christians, who had had the upper hand until then. Despite its limited contribution in terms of participation in real battles, Laskar Jihad consequently had no trouble claiming the public role of heroes predestined to sacrifice their lives in defending Moluccan Muslims from the attacks of their enemies. This image was reinforced by Laskar Jihad's concern with *da'wa* and social activities, including the establishment of sites for Qur'anic recital courses, Islamic primary schools, and a medical clinic. Simultaneous with increasing Muslim demands for a return to the Jakarta Charter, this group even succeeded in inscribing its image as the champion of the comprehensive implementation of the *shari'a*, particularly when it enforced a *rajm* sentence on one member who had raped a local girl.

The changes in the political landscape following Wahid's defeat and Megawati's ascension to power had a profound impact on the sustainability of the Laskar Jihad operations in the Moluccas. Megawati generally chose not to intervene in the internal affairs of the military, and her policy prompted the senior military command to bring the Moluccan conflict quickly to an end. Yon Gab, which was set up by TNI during Wahid's presidency, lost no time in intensifying its sweeping actions against armed militia groups operating in the Moluccas and gradually constricted the territory where Laskar Jihad was able to maneuver. These actions culminated in the Kebun Cengkeh incident in mid-2002. The attempts of Megawati's administration to conduct a series of arrests of militants, in conjunction with the global campaign against terrorism launched by the United States, sent further quakes through Laskar Jihad, which soon began to fragment. The Malino Agreement initiated by senior ministers in Megawati's cabinet was the final nail in the coffin of Thalib's militant religious organization.

The case of Laskar Jihad demonstrates that the activism espoused by a militant group is very much determined by the political opportunities and constraints at work in a particular time and place. This group's decision to resort to violence was

associated with the state's inability to carry out its primary role as the guardian of social order and the enforcer of the law. Indonesia's transition from an authoritative state to a fledgling democracy disturbed the nation's political equilibrium; consequently, proponents of the status quo tried hard to involve new political allies in their negotiations with the opposition. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the emerging Indonesian democracy was still fragile, because of, among other causes, a serious lack of functional democratic traditions and the narrow interests of the political parties involved. Needless to say, the newly liberated public sphere, which enabled all elements in Indonesian society to express their opinions and interests, contributed a great deal to this phenomenon.

It should be noted, however, that the Laskar Jihad mission to the Moluccas and the other trouble spots in Indonesia by no means indicated that militant Muslim groups had successfully taken control of the Indonesian public sphere. This action ultimately served instead to highlight the marginal position of militant Muslims and their unsuccessful efforts to popularize their discourse glorifying militancy and violence. In other words, it is more a sign of weakness than a harbinger of success for militant Muslims. Because such militants pursue their struggle through spectacular violence, jihadi Islam remains on the political periphery and may never succeed in changing the strategic landscape of the country. It certainly did not change the map of Indonesian Islam. Nor has it changed the secular system of the Indonesian nation-state. The majority of Indonesian Muslims remain tolerant and opposed to the use of violence, let alone terrorism. The militancy and violence that engulfed Indonesia in the early years of this new century actually spurred Indonesian Muslims to work more systematically in vocal support of democracy, gender equality, and human rights.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bakorstanas	Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional (Coordination Board for the Assistance of the Maintenance of National Stability)
Banser	Multi-purpose Unit, the paramilitary wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama youth organization, Anshor
BBM	Bugis Buton Makassar (Buginese Butonese Makassarese)
BIMM	Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku (Council of United Moluccan Muslims)
BKPM	Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Masjid (Coordinating Board of Mosque Youth)
BKPMI	Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren seluruh Indonesia (Islamic Boarding School Cooperative Council of Indonesia)
BPK	Barisan Pemuda Ka'bah (Ka'ba Youth Squad)
Brimob	Brigade Mobil (Mobile Brigade)
Bulog	Badan Urusan Logistik (Board of Logistic Affairs)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIC	Committee of Islamic Charity (Lajnat Birr al-Islami)
CIDES	Centre for Information and Development Studies
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation)
DI	Darul Islam (Islamic Abode)
DPD	Dewan Pimpinan Daerah (District Executive Board)
DPP	Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (Central Executive Board)
DPW	Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah (Provincial Executive Board)
FHBB	Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang (God's Army Front of Crescent Moon Party)
FKAWJ	Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (Communication Forum of the Followers of the <i>Sunna</i> and the Community of the Prophet)
FKM	Front Kedaulatan Maluku (Moluccan Sovereignty Front)
FPI	Front Pembela Islam (Front of the Defenders of Islam)
FPIM	Front Pembela Islam Maluku (Front of the Defenders of Islam in the Moluccas)
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Aceh Freedom Movement)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPM	Gerakan Papua Merdeka (Papua Freedom Movement)
Golkar	Golongan Karya (Functionalist Party)
Hammas	Himpunan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim antar-Kampus (Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students)
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Student Association)

HMI-MPO	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (Muslim Student Association-the Assembly of the Saviour of the Organization)
HT Indonesia	Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Party of Liberation)
HW	Hizbul Watan (National Party, Muhammadiyah Scout)
ICMI	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association)
IIFSO	International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization (Hai'at Ighatha al-Islamiyya al-'Alamiyya)
IPB	Institut Pertanian Bogor (Institute of Agriculture of Bogor)
IPS	Institute for Policy Studies
ITB	Institut Teknologi Bandung (Institute of Technology of Bandung)
IRM	Ikatan Remaja Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Youth Association)
JI	Jama'ah Islamiyah (Islamic Community)
JIL	Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network)
JIM	Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin [Indonesia] (Community of Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood)
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chicken
KAMMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students)
KISDI	Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World)
Kodam	Komando Daerah Militer (Regional Military Command)
KOMNASHAM	Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (National Commission of Human Rights)
Kompak	Komite Penanggulangan Krisis (Committee for Overcoming Crises)
Kopassus	Komando Pasukan Khusus (Special Armed Force Command)
Korem	Komando Resort Militer (District Military Command)
LDK	Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (University <i>Da'wa</i> Organization)
LIPIA	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (Institute of the Study for Islam and Arabic)
Litsus	Lembaga Penelitian Khusus (Board for Special Investigation)
LJ	Laskar Jihad (Jihad Militia Force)
LK	Laskar Kristus (Christ's Militia Force)
LKMD	Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (Village Community Resilience Board)
LMD	Lembaga Musyawarah Desa (Village Assembly)
LMI	Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Force)
LPBA	Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (Institute of Arabic Teaching)
LPI	Laskar Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Force)
Masyumi	Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Assembly)
Menwa	Resimen Mahasiswa (University Student Regiment)
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MMI	Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Assembly)
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian <i>'Ulama</i>)

NII	Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic State)
NKK/BKK	Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus-Badan Koordinasi Kampus (Normalization of Campus Policy-Campus Coordination Board)
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Association of Muslim Scholars)
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conferences
P4	Pedoman Penghayatan Pengamalan Pancasila (Guide to Comprehension and Practice of the Pancasila)
Pam Swakarsa	Pasukan Pengamanan Swakarsa (Self-Service Security Force)
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)
PAS	Partai Aksi Islam se-Malaysia (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Action Party)
Paskhas	Korps Pasukan Khas (Special Force Corps)
PB	Pendekar Banten (Banten Warriors)
PBB	Partai Bulan Bintang (Crescent Moon Party)
PDI	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party)
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)
Pelni	Pelayaran Nasional (National Shipping Company)
Persis	Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union)
PGAN	Pendidikan Guru Agama Negeri (State Islamic Teachers Training School)
PII	Pelajar Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Students)
PK	Partai Keadilan (Justice Party)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperity and Justice Party)
PPMI	Persatuan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Muslim Workers)
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)
PRRI	Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia)
RAI	Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League)
RMS	Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of the South Moluccas)
SDI	Sarekat Dagang Islam (Muslim Merchant Union)
SI	Sarekat Islam (Islamic League)
STAIN	Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (State College of Islamic Studies)
STIIBA	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Islam dan Bahasa Arab (College of Islamic and Arabic Studies)
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
TNT	Trinitrotoluene
TPM	Tim Pengacara Muslim (Muslim Attorney Team)
UKIM	Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (Indonesian Christian University of the Moluccas)
UMI	Universitas Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim University)
Unpatti	Universitas Pattimura (Pattimura University)
UPN	Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (National University of Development)
USCRIF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth (al-Nadwa al-'Alamiyya li al-Shabab al-Islami)

WCM	World Council of Mosques (al-Majlis al-Islami li'l-Masajid)
Yon Gab	Batalyon Gabungan (TNI Combined Battalion)

GLOSSARY

abangan: Indonesian Muslims who maintain local customs influenced by Animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism

ahkam: Islamic Law

al-bara: to show hostility towards heresy and infidelity

al-wala: disseminate the message of solidarity and unity of the *umma* on the basis of its loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad

`Aqida: Islamic Creed

Barisan Pemuda Ka'bah (*Ka'ba* Youth Squad)

Barisan Nasional: National Front

bay'a: the doctrine of oath of allegiance that requires all members of a movement to take a vow of loyalty to their leader

bid'a: reprehensible innovations

Corps Hizbullah Divisi Sunan Bonang (God's Party Corps of the Sunan Bonang Division)

daura: literally meaning "turn," which is a type of workshop held for a period ranging from one week to one month

Front Jihad Bersatu (United Jihad Front)

hadith: Prophetic traditions

hakimiyya: sovereignty

halqas: Circle, a forum for the study of Islamic sciences

Hai'at Kibar al-`Ulama (Committee of the Senior `Ulama)

hijra: migration

hizbiyya: involved in politics

ijma`: consensus

ijtihad: independent legal reasoning

Ikatan Pelajar al-Irsyad (al-Irsyad Student Association)

Ikatan Taklim Salafi (Salafi Religious Teaching Association)

ikhtilat: doctrine that forbids mingling between men and women

Institut Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan (Teachers' Training State College)

Jama'ah Islamiyah: Muslim community

Jama'ah Shalahuddin: Shalahuddin Community

kafir I'tiqadi: infidel at the level of belief

kafir `Amali: infidel at the level of practice

kitab kuning: yellow books, referring to classical Arabic texts

Komando Jihad (Jihad Commando)

Kompi Badar (Badar Company)

khurafa: myths, superstitions

Laskar Fi Sabilillah (Holy Force for the Cause of God)

Laskar Jundullah (God's Army Paramilitary Force)

Laskar Santri (Muslim Student Paramilitary Force)

Latihan Mujahid Dakwah: Training of *Da'wa* Strivers

mabhath: analysis

madhhab: a school of Islamic law

manhaj: method

murabbi: instructor

Musabaqat Tilawat al-Qur'an: The Contest of Reciting the Qur'an

Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila)

Pendidikan Guru Agama Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Islamic Teacher Training School)

pesantrens: rural-based Islamic learning centers

qiyas: analogy

Salaf al-Salih: pious ancestors

santri: Muslims committed to an essentially normative profession of the faith

shahada: Muslim's creed, which teaches "*La ilaha illa Allah*" (There is no God but Allah)

sira: Islamic history

shirk: polytheism

tabligh akbar: propagation of the faith or message

Tablighi Jama'at (*Da'wa* Society)

tafsir: Quranic Exegesis

taghut: The ruler whose non-adherence to the *shari'a* is proven

takfir: A doctrine stating that Muslims must excommunicate any sovereign considered apostate, using violence if necessary.

takhayyul: superstitions

taqlid: blind imitation of medieval scholarly authorities

tarbiya: education

tarbiyah Islamiyah: Islamic upbringing

tasfiya: purification

tawhid: to accept and believe in the oneness of God and his absolute authority.

tawhid al-asma wa'l-sifat: unity of Allah's names and attributes

tawhid rububiyya: unity of lordship)

tawhid 'ubudiyya: unity of worship

umma: community of believers

ustadhs: religious teachers

Wahhabism: a Puritanical sect of Islam

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